

Adopted by the Board of Directors
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Strategic Plan For Roxborough Development Corporation

2015-2020



Heritage
Consulting Inc.

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Introduction

Ridge Avenue is the neighborhood commercial corridor for the Roxborough community. The Roxborough Development Corporation's (RDC) Board, volunteers, and staff have been working hard since 1992 to enhance Ridge Avenue by promoting special events, beautifying and cleaning Ridge Avenue, helping existing business to expand while recruiting new ones, and marketing and communicating about the corridor and the organization throughout the year.

Since 2003, the Roxborough Development Corporation has blended the Main Street Four Point Approach™, a downtown revitalization organizing mechanism, while relying on two sustainable revenue sources, the Community Development Corporation Tax Credit Program and a Business Improvement District, to support operations and programming. This hybrid model has created a highly effective public-private partnership to revitalize the Ridge Avenue shopping district.

The RDC was an early adopter of the National Main Street Center's Main Street Four Point Approach™ in Philadelphia. The Main Street Four Point Approach™ is a volunteer-driven, historic preservation-based, economic development program. The Main Street program is a thirty five year old national model for revitalizing downtowns that is entirely dependent on local fundraising, government support, and volunteer muscle to get things done.

As one of the 13 Business Improvement Districts (BID) in the City of Philadelphia, since 2003 the RDC has collected a yearly assessment from property owners to pay for additional services that benefit all property owners in the district.

Roxborough also participates in the City of Philadelphia's Community Development Corporation Tax Credit Program (CDC Tax Credit) and partners with Penn Distributors. This corporation has provided an annual \$85,000 contribution since 2002 as part of their ten year partnership with the RDC.

Stakeholder involvement

The Ridge Avenue commercial corridor is the core of the Roxborough neighborhood. Ridge Avenue defines the local identity and reflects the community's history and "sense of place." The Main Street Approach™ stresses historic preservation as the underlying design principle for the commercial district's revitalization effort. Main Street efforts nationwide aim to maximize the economic potential of each historic commercial corridor while preserving its authentic character. For Roxborough, the volunteer-led committees are critical to the success of the program and involve stakeholders—residents, business owners, and property owners—in making decisions about the future of the commercial corridor. These stakeholders participated in all facets of the research leading up to the creation of this new Strategic Plan. This Plan represents the next phase in the organizational development of the RDC.

The Roxborough Development Corporation used BID funds to pay for this three phase strategic planning effort. Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based WBE consulting firm, provided technical assistance to the RDC to create this Strategic Plan. Donna Ann Harris of Heritage Consulting Inc. worked collectively with James Harry Calamia, the Roxborough Development Corporation's Executive Director, to organize two meetings and promote the online survey. There was active participation by Roxborough Development Corporation Board members, neighborhood organization and civic association representatives, business owners, merchants, and many local residents that serve on the RDC committees in the two evening meetings. The research was conducted over six months and included three distinct activities, which are outlined below.

- 1) SWOT Analysis. Held on February 18, 2015 this three-hour evening meeting received the input of 45 participants, including Roxborough Development Corporation Board members, committee chairs, downtown merchants, property owners, neighborhood and civic association representatives, and local residents. During the meeting, we discussed the current conditions of both the commercial corridor and the Roxborough Development Corporation organization. A summary memo was prepared that offered observations and recommendations for solving several specific problems in the short- and medium-term. The SWOT report was discussed with the Board on February 24, 2015.
- 2) Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey. Conducted for three weeks from March 9, 2015 to March 30, 2015, this survey was an extraordinary success with more than 650 complete responses. The responses represented a statistically valid sample of the Roxborough population. The survey provided critical demographic and market data about the current commercial corridor shopper. A 140-page report prepared by Heritage Consulting Inc. was circulated to the Roxborough Development Corporation Board on April 28, 2015.
- 3) Visioning and Strategic Planning Workshop. Held on Thursday evening, May 14, 2015, this session was two and a half hours long and included ten Roxborough Development Corporation Board members, business owners, key volunteers, and residents. Prior to the workshop, all participants received copies of the SWOT report, Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey Report, and an executive summary. This workshop began with a brief summary of the results of the SWOT and Online Survey. During the workshop, all participated in a visioning exercise to help the assembled group visualize the future of the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor five years from now. Finally, we used the visioning exercise to identify specific strategies to implement projects toward the realization of this long-term vision of the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor. The draft Strategic Plan will be discussed with the Board on May 26, 2015.

What is a Strategic Plan?

Board Source™, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the public good by building exceptional nonprofit Boards and inspiring Board service, defines a Strategic Plan as a written document that defines an organization's over-arching strategies and major areas of work for the next five years to achieve the organization's mission.

Strategic plans for nonprofit organizations are created through a process that builds on research to accumulate wisdom about the organization, its environment, and economic potential. This process involves stakeholders to ensure that the resulting Strategic Plan contains a comprehensive understanding of the organization's preferred future.

New Mission and Vision Statements

As part of the Visioning and Strategic Planning workshop, we asked participants to review the organization's existing 2009 mission statement to determine if it is still valid, and to note if any changes were necessary. There were many comments made about the current mission statement, so we provided a new mission statement to compliment the overall new direction of the organization as discussed during the workshop.

What is a mission statement?

A mission statement articulates where the organization is now, not at some desired point in the future. An ideal mission statement identifies why the organization exists, who benefits, what the organization does and, finally, how it does what it does. A good mission statement conveys how the organization relates to its public and communities; why and how it enhances the well-being of others and improves quality of life; and, finally, what service it provides. A mission statement should be easily memorized, as it becomes a part of the "elevator speech" about the organization.

Current Roxborough Development Corporation Mission Statement

The Roxborough Development Corporation is a community driven organization dedicated to provide a safe, clean, and welcoming shopping, recreational and entertainment experience along Roxborough's main commercial corridor.

New Mission Statement

To provide Roxborough residents with high quality shopping, dining and entertainment experiences.

New Vision Statement

A vision statement describes the preferred future of both the organization and commercial corridor after five years of work towards fulfilling the dreams of stakeholders. The vision statement should focus on the community impact and the power of the organization to transform the commercial district. A good vision statement is ambitious enough to force people out of comfortable routines, and is conceptual but practical, taking advantage of fundamental trends from consumer research. A vision statement should be clear enough to articulate the visual changes in the commercial corridor along Ridge Avenue.

Suggested Roxborough Development Corporation Vision Statement

Short version

By 2020 Ridge Avenue will be the heart and hub of the Roxborough neighborhood where residents find a thriving commercial district.

Long version

Our Vision for Ridge Avenue in 2020

By 2020 Ridge Avenue will be the heart and hub of the Roxborough neighborhood where residents find a thriving commercial district with exciting restaurants and a growing number of independent retailers and national chain stores.

The commercial corridor is effectively managed with the Roxborough Development Corporation (RDC) taking responsibility for all aspects of the customer experience, including event planning; way-finding signage; installing gateways, banners, and holiday decorations; maintaining planters and trees; parking management; and its traditional role in assuring that the corridor is safe and clean.

Throughout the week, customers visit Ridge Avenue's fine compliment of retail shops and restaurants or have an appointment at the numerous small offices or professional service providers along Ridge Avenue. Workers at Roxborough Memorial Hospital and our other major neighborhood employers use our commercial corridor daily before and after work and at lunchtime. On weekends, Ridge Avenue will be crowded with Gen X couples running errands and with Baby Boomers trying out the newest restaurant or shopping in an independent shop that is new to the Avenue.

Ridge Avenue is alive with color year-round, through our seasonal flower displays and place making signage. Our extensive tree cover shades pedestrians in summer, and provides visual interest in spring and fall. The organization takes responsibility for maintaining and placing quality way-finding signage and festive holiday decorations. The well-regarded way-finding

system and new kiosks show pedestrians where to find their favorite store or restaurant. The organization is responsible for landscaping and managing the two parking lots purchased or leased from the City, and for installing and programming the new pocket park. Ridge Avenue is always sparkling as a result of regular sweeping and cleaning. There is consistent and visible policing, thus assuring that our corridor is safe. The extensive stock of historic buildings along Ride Avenue continue to be well maintained and are celebrated through history related events and activities year round. In the last five years, we completed the final phase of our streetscape project which has been a total success.

The RDC is the “go to” place for businesses that wish to locate or expand on Ridge Avenue. When the rare storefront vacancy occurs, new and appropriate uses are found, as the RDC maintains a list of interested local and national retailers. The recent spate of award-winning new construction compliments the existing historic buildings, bringing vital new uses to the district. The RDC continues to manage the two multi-use properties it developed and has attracted tenants that are well loved community anchors.

The RDC works closely with the Civic Associations and other neighborhood nonprofit organizations to host major special events throughout the year that bring people to Ridge Avenue and keep our sidewalks and parking lots full. Our Ridge Avenue business owners actively participate in the events and co-op advertising sponsored by the RDC. Year round, the beloved sidewalk cafes, shops and entertainment venues keep Ridge Avenue hopping. We work closely with the merchants to promote a handful of high quality and creative retail events each year that appeal to neighborhood residents.

Our partnerships with Roxborough’s civic and religious organizations are highly developed and beneficial to both parties, thus fostering renewed citizen involvement and community pride. The RDC continues its longstanding, productive and cordial working relationships with our elected officials at the City, Commonwealth and Federal levels. The RDC is a full partner with the Commerce Department on merchant and storefront issues. We work closely with the City of Philadelphia on any local planning or capital project in the corridor and host ribbon cuttings, events, and other publicity to promote a positive image of Ridge Avenue.

By 2020, the operating budget for the RDC has increased to more than \$500,000. There is superb Board and staff leadership. The Board manages a staff of five including an executive director, a marketing and communications manager, an administrative assistant, two Ridge Avenue Ambassadors, as well as an array of interns and student workers. More than 80 volunteers on the roster provide leadership for and mount our award-winning festivals and retail events for the neighborhood.

The hard work of the RDC to improve Ridge Avenue during the last five years has been a real catalyst. Our property values have increased; our public schools are on the upswing; and the economic well-being of the greater Roxborough neighborhood has markedly improved.

We were elated when Roxborough Development Corporation won the Great American Main Street Award from the National Main Street Center, a testament to our hard work. In 2020, the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor is truly an exciting place to shop, live, work, and play.

Strategic Goals

The goal-setting portion of the May 14, 2015 workshop helped to take the long-term vision for the organization and create a specific future direction for Ridge Avenue than can be accomplished in the next five years. Board and Committee members prepared a brief statement of their committee's overall goal for the future. They were asked to be specific about the outcome of five years' work. The following are the future strategic goals for downtown Roxborough as prepared by each of the committees at the May 14, 2015 evening workshop.

2015-2020 Roxborough Development Corporation Strategic Goals

1. Aggressively communicate good news about the Ridge Avenue commercial district as the heart and hub of the Roxborough neighborhood using traditional and social media.
2. Encourage a diverse business mix on Ridge Avenue. Stimulate expansion of existing business and recruit new business to locate here.
3. Ridge Avenue will be clean and safe thus adding to the neighborhood's superb quality of life. Our district's tree canopy and seasonal flower displays add visual interest and welcome shoppers year round. Encourage merchants and property owners to restore historic buildings, undertake quality façade renovation and to install handsome and appropriate signage.
4. Maintain our year-long calendar of fun retail and special events to drive customers into stores. We work closely with our partners to add appropriate shopping components to their events.
5. By 2020 the RDC annual budget has grown to \$500,000 primarily through private sector fundraising including: net profits from special events; Board gifts; increases in rental income from RDC-owned real estate including buildings and parking lots; a legislative increase in the CDC Tax Credit if passed, and by expanding the BID budget by 3%.

An ambitious agenda

This Strategic Plan sets out a very ambitious improvement agenda for the Roxborough Development Corporation over the next five (5) years. All of these activities are important and worthy, but the RDC Board must reach agreement about how it will staff these activities.

While there are already some volunteers involved with the organization, there are not enough to implement even a small portion of these activities. More volunteers are needed to add to the already hard working existing volunteer group.

The five Strategic Goals serve as the bridge to the new vision for the future of Ridge Avenue. All of the short and longer-term projects, individually and collectively, move the organization towards making this vision into a reality by allocating all of its financial and volunteer resources accordingly.

The activities and programs that Roxborough Development Corporation will implement in the future, through the combination of Board, staff, committees, partners, and individual task force volunteers, all must be aligned to achieve at least one (1) of the five (5) above Strategic Goals. If a project does not *clearly* meet any of the Strategic Goals, the project should neither be staffed nor funded, as the organization has a finite number of volunteers and financial resources.

Role of Work Plans

Work plans for each project are completed by the volunteer committees and are approved by the Board. The plans provide detail on how to implement an effective project. Every work plan contains the following elements: who (person or partner organization), what, when, how much expense, how much revenue, volunteer hours, staff hours, anticipated results, and the Strategic Goal(s) met. Collectively, these work plans become the substance of the materials submitted by the Board to the BID stakeholders in addition to the proposed budget for support each year. Work plans can be used to sell sponsorships, support fundraising efforts, volunteer recruitment, partner identification and recruitment.

Conclusion

This 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for Ridge Avenue is a review of the past performance of the organization and a representation of its bright future. This Strategic Plan contains new mission and vision statements. The five Strategic Goals mentioned above organize the rest of the document and should be used to guide all of the organization's work in the next five (5) years, which is the useful life of this planning document.

Board of Directors, Executive, Finance and Nominating Committees

Strategic Goal: By 2020 the RDC annual budget has grown to \$500,000 primarily through private sector fundraising including: net profits from special events; Board gifts; increases in rental income from RDC-owned real estate including buildings and parking lots; a legislative increase in the CDC Tax Credit if passed, and by expanding the BID budget by 3%.

Specific Projects

Budget growth, training and oversight

- By 2020, the annual operating budget of the Roxborough Development Corporation will be \$500,000. To meet this budget target, we need to raise close to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in unrestricted operating funds each year. Likely sources include: net profits from special events, Board gifts, a legislative increase in the CDC Tax Credit from \$85,000 to \$100,000 yearly (should legislation pass), increases in rental income from RDC owned real estate including buildings and parking lots, and by expanding the BID budget.
- To meet the budget target in 2020, the RDC Board will need to grow its capacity to raise funds from the private sector. Board and staff will participate in fundraising training of various kinds to expand their skills, so they can confidently raise more money each year, and meet this ambitious budget goal of raising \$100,000 in five years.

Create work plans for all committee projects

- Create work plans for all committee projects so that the Board can track all projects on a monthly basis. All committees should review the profit/loss for any event/activity as soon as it is complete, and adjust the work plan for the activity next year.

Expand fundraising skills on the Board

- Work with the Board members to identify new volunteers who will help with fundraising efforts. Identify the skills needed for the project, and create job descriptions for specific volunteer jobs. Recruit, train, and orient new volunteers to their fundraising assignments as described in the work plans.

Expand the budget of the BID

- The current (2015) BID budget is \$285,000. Expand the budget in two years by 3% to \$300,000 from current BID property owners. Regularly explain the benefits of additional services such as street cleaning and new retail events with property owners.

CDC Tax Credit program

- Continue to monitor any changes to the Community Development Tax Credit Program, especially if the annual funding opportunity increases from the current \$85,000 to \$100,000 yearly. Work with the Tax Credit partner to implement.

Expand fundraising opportunities

- Seek 100% participation from RDC Board members in a new Board giving effort with a goal of raising \$2,500 in 2016.
- Continue to review the fees charged to vendors and sponsors for events and increase by a small amount each year.
- Develop an annual gifts program from residents to financially support the RDC projects. Create a small task force to implement. Set a goal of raising \$10,000 in 2016.

Seek appropriate project grants

- Continue to identify appropriate corporate, government, and foundation grant opportunities for RDC projects and make applications as needed.

Grow parking lot revenue

- Continue to maintain, insure, plow, and beautify the Dupont Street parking lot that the RDC now leases from the City to enhance it as revenue generator for the RDC.
- Continue the RDC's informal management and clean-up of the Leverington Street parking lot to enhance its appearance.
- Start a conversation with the City about purchasing the two City owned parking lots or securing a lease agreement to manage them as revenue generators for the RDC.

Expand relationships with area banks

- Work with the each of the financial institutions (banks and credit unions) on Ridge Avenue to develop and deepen existing partnerships, sponsorships, and investigate any tax credits available.

Expand relationships with area employers

- Work with the major employers in Roxborough, including Roxborough Memorial Hospital, Pennsylvania College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Fairmount Behavioral

Health (owned by Universal Health) to develop and deepen existing partnerships, sponsorships, and their investment in the district.

Investigate all Commonwealth funding opportunities

- Seek Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grant support for Roxborough projects, especially multi-modal transportation (Act 89 funding) and the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant program administered by the Office of the Budget for the acquisition and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and historical improvement projects. Continue to seek the advice of State Representative Pam DeLissio on Commonwealth grant opportunities.

Board leadership

- Provide training to Board members on their roles and responsibilities as nonprofit board members and BID representatives at least every other year.
- Apply for the Great American Main Street Award from the National Main Street Center before 2020 to recognize our superb work.

Nominating Committee

- Work with the Nominating Committee to identify candidates for Board leadership in the coming year. Identify training or mentoring to bring likely Board or officer candidates into more responsible positions so they can step into future leadership positions.
- Consider sending any Board member or volunteer to training offered by Pennsylvania Downtown Association, another Main Street related group, as an overview of the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to provide baseline orientation about RDC's work. Alert Board members and volunteers to training opportunities from other planning and economic development organizations in the region.

Asset Enhancement Committee

Strategic Goal: Encourage a diverse business mix on Ridge Avenue. Stimulate expansion of existing business and recruit new business to locate here.

Expand committee membership

- Expand committee membership. Work with the committee chair to identify skills needed for the committee and create job descriptions for specific volunteer jobs. Recruit, train, and orient new volunteers to their committee assignments as described in the work plans.

Create work plans for all committee projects

- Create work plans for all committee projects so that the Board can track all projects on a monthly basis. All committees and task forces should review the profit/loss for their event/activity as soon as it is complete, and adjust the work plan for the event next year.

Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey

- Post the recently completed Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey on the RDC website.
- Widely disseminate the Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey report to existing merchants and work with them to alter their product mix to appeal to the current downtown shoppers as described in this report.
- The Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey noted that the vast majority (85%) of current shoppers live in Roxborough. Use this information to refine any advertising buys by the RDC. Make existing merchants aware of this information so they can adjust their media buys accordingly.

Understand the current market

- Update the existing business inventory, including first and second floor businesses, in the commercial corridor at least yearly. Maintain and regularly update this data on the business directory portion of the new RDC website.
- Consider investing in a retail market analysis to better understand the Roxborough trade area and how the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor competes (or not) with Main Street Manayunk.
- Use the retail market analysis report, the online survey information and demographics to sell the corridor to prospective retailers and restaurateurs.

- Provide useful advice to merchants and property owners about the changing demographics in Roxborough, the dominant customers in the commercial corridor and opportunities for business expansion as needed.

Educate and retain existing businesses

- Conduct additional workshops with area merchants as needed to help them use the survey information to expand their product lines or refocus their business to take advantage of customer preferences. Work with existing businesses to make their ventures more successful.
- Continue to regularly visit existing businesses to keep up to date with their concerns, hear about any possible business expansion plans, and to alert them to any Roxborough Development Corporation created business promotions and events.

Recruit new complimentary businesses

- Use the recently printed (2015) business recruitment package to encourage additional investment in the corridor. Update and expand this brochure as needed.
- Review existing marketing materials for business recruitment and retention purposes in the corridor and create new materials as needed using data from the new survey.
- Target specific business types for recruitment from the Online Consumer and Stakeholder Survey completed in 2015. Recruit new types of restaurants for any vacant restaurant space.

Work with the local real estate community

- Strengthen relationships with property owners and area commercial real estate brokers that represent commercial properties in commercial corridor. Use the recently completed Online Consumer and Stakeholder survey to explain which businesses are highly desired by current shoppers.
- Develop and host a developer and investor event to showcase opportunities along the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor.
- Actively promote the opportunities for upper story housing in the CMX 2.5 zoning classification along Ridge Avenue.

- Work closely with the landlords to understand their motivations and offer assistance when a vacancy occurs.

Monitor the commercial corridor

- Continue to monitor the district's vacancy rate, rental rates, job creation, and sales data at least quarterly and make the corridor's Reinvestment Statistics widely available.

Promote positive change on Ridge Avenue

- Promote any successes in attracting new business, new investment, and new jobs on the Ridge Avenue corridor by publishing stories in the e-newsletter, RDC website, and other social media platforms. Pitch these stories to local and regional news sources.
- Use the monthly e-newsletter to disseminate information about recent zoning changes and other real estate news. Update this information at least monthly.
- Regularly update the "Space Available" information on the RDC web site and in the e-newsletter.

Marketing and Events Committee

Strategic Goals:

1. Aggressively communicate good news about the Ridge Avenue commercial district as the heart and hub of the Roxborough neighborhood using traditional and social media.
1. Maintain our year-long calendar of fun retail and special events to drive customers into stores. We work closely with our partners to add appropriate shopping components to their events.

Create work plans for all committee projects

- Create work plans for all committee projects so that the Board can track all projects on a monthly basis. All committees and task forces should review the profit/loss for their activity as soon as it is complete, and adjust the work plan for the activity next year.

Expand committee membership

- Expand committee membership. Work with the committee chair to identify skills needed for the committee and create job descriptions for specific volunteer jobs. Recruit, train, and orient new committee members to their assignments as described in the work plans.

Branding Roxborough

- Form a joint task force with the local civic association to create a brand for Roxborough's residential and commercial district. Identify funding for such a project and engage a qualified design professional to help create a brand (logo, tag line, and brand promise) for the community that works for both the residential and commercial district.

Create a new RDC website

- Invest in a quality website for the Roxborough Development Corporation that is mobile friendly and is integrated with the RDC Facebook page, Twitter feed, Instagram, and other social media platforms. Utilize a content management system that permits RDC staff to make updates easily. Use Google Analytics to understand who visits the website and maximize content through Search Engine Optimization.
- Host an online calendar of community events happening on and near the Ridge on the RDC website.

- Consider creating simple web pages for corridor businesses without an online presence. Charge a small fee for this service as part of the business directory on the new website.

Market and advertise Roxborough

- Brand and market the neighborhood and the district, through public relations, social media and advertising.
- Continue to aggressively collect email addresses and add these names to the e-blast list so that it continues to grow into the thousands.
- Gather names of all Roxborough area elected/appointed representatives and their staff members in their home district office and in City Hall, Harrisburg, or Washington, and put them on the RDC mailing list and e-blast. Advertise the RDC's Facebook page and Twitter feed to them as well.
- Review and revise the advertising and marketing efforts for all events and activities as needed.
- Continue to invest in social media. Maintain an active presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Consider adding other social media platforms as they become available.

Public Relations

- Work with a Public Relations consultant to:
 - Grow the media list and update as needed. Regularly send press releases about commercial corridor happenings to local, regional, and national media outlets.
 - Regularly pitch stories to local and regional media outlets about local trends and impact of national events on Ridge Avenue businesses. Focus PR attention to Philadelphia Magazine and FooBooz.
 - Actively advertise RDC organized events and activities on visitphilly.com, uwishunu.com, and other regional visitor websites.
- Use social media outlets to drive traffic to the new RDC web site where additional event information and maps will be available about all RDC sponsored events and activities.
- Use both digital and traditional marketing tools (post cards, flyers, posters, and the Roxborough-Manayunk phone book) to communicate about event happenings.

- Communicate with organizations and institutions about the work of the RDC including churches, YMCA, Roxborough Memorial Hospital, other employers and business in the district. Attend annual meetings or other gatherings of area partner organizations.
- Use the RDC Facebook page, email newsletter, and Twitter feed to promote partner events that occur in the district.
- Consider creating a handsome annual report each year and make the annual Reinvestment Statistics widely available.

Work with individual business owners

- Work with existing businesses to help them understand various customer review platforms such as Yelp and Trip Advisor and the impact of customer reviews on their business success.
- Continue to feature individual businesses on the e-newsletter, Facebook page, Google Plus, and Twitter as appropriate.

Review existing RDC sponsored special events

- The Marketing and Events Committee should review existing special events and make changes to them based on the key consumer groups that shop on Ridge Avenue now: the Gen X cohort (women between 30 and 49) and Baby Boomers (women between 50 and 69).
- Conduct simple evaluations of every Roxborough Development Corporation sponsored special event to determine volunteer and attendee satisfaction.
- Coordinate with other Roxborough event sponsors to help them understand who shops in the commercial corridor now and encourage them to make changes to their events to better target their primary customer demographics.

Create an annual calendar of events

- Create an annual calendar of special events and retail events, listing RDC and non RDC events, and promote these opportunities widely on the RDC website and through traditional and social media outlets.

Create new retail events

- Over the next five years, fill out the calendar of corridor events to bring shoppers to Ridge Avenue by creating new retail events designed to ring cash registers at corridor

business throughout the year. Work with area merchants to identify retail events that would most benefit them and enlist them in planning and implementing these events.

- Create new retail or special events based on volunteer interests.
- Review existing sponsorship opportunities and vendor fees for all existing events, and determine if some of the sponsorship fees could be increased each year and implement increases as needed.

Create history related events in the corridor

- Work with the Roxborough-Manayunk-Wissahickon Historical Society to determine their interest in working on any of the following projects with the RDC:
 - Offering Historic Preservation Month events or activities in May each year to promote restoration and retention of historic buildings in the commercial corridor.
 - Publications or events to promote corridor history or an awards program to highlight good design in the commercial corridor.
 - Work with others to explore how to place additional interpretive signage throughout the commercial corridor to acknowledge and celebrate Roxborough's history.
 - Organize to celebrate the 330 Anniversary of Roxborough in 2020.

Expand existing partnerships

- Actively partner with the civic associations, neighborhood groups, and area schools that sponsor events in Gorgas Park and other locations along Ridge Avenue. Work with these partners that host regular special events throughout the year to offer shopping opportunities before and after their events.
- Expand our relationship with the Manayunk Development Corporation and work on issues of mutual interest.
- Invite all elected representatives to all major announcements, ribbon cuttings, or events and provide an opportunity for them to speak. Join the mailing lists, email list, and Facebook pages of all elected and appointed officials to get their news on a regular basis.

Volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition

- Expand the volunteer pool to help implement activities through aggressive recruitment at RDC sponsored events, and by publishing volunteer job descriptions on Facebook, Twitter, and the e-newsletter.
- Continue to add to current volunteer database. Add anyone who has expressed interest in volunteering on any project. Use this list to solicit for volunteers for any project across committees/task forces. Add to this list as new volunteers come forward.
- Create short volunteer job descriptions for specific projects where expertise is needed.
- Encourage the most interested volunteers to take on increasing leadership roles by chairing events, becoming committee leaders, or serving on the RDC Board. Offer to send these star volunteers to trainings as available.
- Host an annual volunteer appreciation event. By 2020, the volunteer appreciation event will be considered an important date on the local social calendar

District Improvements Committee

Strategic Goal: Ridge Avenue will be clean and safe thus adding to the neighborhood's superb quality of life. Our district's tree canopy and seasonal flower displays add visual interest and welcome shoppers year round. Encourage merchants and property owners to restore historic buildings, undertake quality façade renovation and to install handsome and appropriate signage.

Create work plans for all Committee projects

- Create work plans for all committee projects so that the Board can track all projects on a monthly basis. All committees and task forces should review the profit/loss for their event/activity as soon as it is complete, and adjust the work plan for the event next year.

Expand committee membership

- Expand committee membership. Work with the committee chair to identify skills needed for the committee and create job descriptions for specific volunteer jobs. Recruit, train, and orient new volunteers to their volunteer assignments as described in the work plans.

Public safety

- Create a task force with the Civic Association about crime and safety on the Avenue and in the neighborhood. Meet with the 5th District Captain and City Councilmember Curtis Jones to address the concerns expressed by survey respondents about drug dealing, nuisance bars, and general quality of life issues in Roxborough. Publicize the results of any meetings with the 5th District, Councilmember Jones' office or State Representative DeLisso's office and continue to follow up on concerns.
- Continue to monitor crime statistics for Ridge Avenue in the 5th Police District.
- Combat misperceptions about the corridor's safety by publicizing any positive change in crime statistics in the corridor to a broad network of stakeholders using traditional and new media.
- Encourage merchants and property owners to participate in any crime or safety programs for commercial corridors.

Cleanliness and public amenities

- Continue to monitor the general condition of corridor sidewalk and gutter cleanliness, trash, dumpsters, and city placed trashcans.

- Expand the RDC's street cleaning services. Hire another staff member to provide cleaning services in 2016.
- Undertake a short survey of area shoppers in 2016 to determine if Ridge Avenue is perceived as cleaner.
- Report any vandalism, graffiti, broken streetlights, or broken parking meters to the City's 311 program and follow up until repaired.
- Continue to place holiday decorations in the corridor including wreaths, lights, garlands, and skylines (snowflakes). Consider adding to existing holiday decorations as funding is available.

Streetscape

- Plant mature, sustainable mini-gardens in the existing planters. Work with shop owners and the Garden Club to plant and maintain the planters year round. Contract out watering services, tree maintenance, and weed control activities. Consider sponsorship or crowd funding opportunities to pay for planting materials and watering services.
- Work with Tree Philly to remove any dead trees along the Ridge and replace them with new healthy trees. Install trees in every tree pit currently available by 2020. Publicize any new tree installations.
- Investigate funding for completion of the streetscape on the north and south ends of Ridge Avenue to match the work already completed in the core of the district.

Ridge Avenue Pocket Park

- Continue to design, fund and implement the pocket park planned for Ridge Avenue. Host opening celebrations, continue to maintain and program the pocket park.

Parking and way-finding

- Inventory all parking meters on Ridge Avenue, identify which ones are broken. Bring this information to the attention of the Philadelphia Parking Authority (PPA) and ask them to fix any broken parking meters. Share this information about broken parking meters with Councilman Jones' office. Investigate options other than parking meters with the PPA for Ridge Avenue. Discuss overly aggressive ticketing of parking violations in the commercial corridor based on the survey results with the PPA and Councilman Jones' and State Representative DeLisso's offices.
- Identify funding for new way-finding signs to direct cars to parking lots.

Encourage restoration and quality rehabilitation

- Continue to encourage property owners to maintain and restore their buildings. Provide high quality design advice when needed. Use existing design guidelines to promote quality work. Work with the Commerce Department's Storefront Improvement Program to provide matching grants for restoration/rehabilitation.
- Continue to provide good advice to any commercial corridor property owner or business owner by becoming the "go-to" office for assistance with signage, façade, or exterior improvements by maintaining abundant materials, including examples and vendors.

Short, Medium, and Long Term Goals 2015-2020

Board of Directors, Executive, Finance, and Nominating Committees

Within one year

- Create work plans for all Board committee projects
- Recruit and train volunteers to help with fundraising activities
- Participate in fundraising training to expand Board skills
- 100% participation in a new Board giving program
- Review sponsorship and vendor fees yearly
- Expand revenue from parking lots
- Seek Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants for RDC projects as appropriate
- Create a Nominating Committee to identify candidates for Board and officer positions
- Offer training opportunities to any Board or volunteer who is interested
- Continue to maintain the Dupont Street parking lot, continue the informal management of the Leverington Avenue parking lot,

Within two to three years

- Expand the budget of the BID by 3% to \$300,000
- Develop a residential annual gifts program for RDC projects
- Continue to identify corporate, government, and foundation project grant opportunities
- Start a conversation with the City about purchasing the two parking lots
- Deepen relationships with area financial institutions
- Deepen relationships with area employers
- Provide board training every other year

Within four or five years

- Grow the RDC operating budget to \$500,000
- Raise \$100,000 in unrestricted operating funds
- Monitor changes to the CDC Tax Credit Program and grow that revenue source as appropriate
- Apply for the Great American Main Street Award from the National Main Street Center

Asset Enhancement Committee

Within one year

- Expand committee membership, create volunteer job descriptions
- Create work plans
- Post the Online Consumer and Stakeholder survey to RDC web site
- Widely disseminate the Survey report, work with merchants to help them alter their product mix based on survey results

- Help merchants make adjustments to their media buys based on survey results
- Update the business inventory yearly
- Conduct workshops and training for businesses to make their ventures more successful
- Continue to visit with businesses on Ridge Avenue
- Use the business recruitment materials to actively attract new businesses
- Target specific businesses for recruitment based on survey report
- Strengthen relationships with the local real estate community
- Host a developer/investor showcase
- Work with landlords to understand their motivations
- Continue to monitor the corridor's reinvestment statistics
- Promote positive news about new business openings
- Use e-newsletter to promote news about the district
- Regularly update Space Available portion of web site

Within two to three years

- Help merchants understand changing demographics in the area, and the current customers shopping on Ridge Avenue
- Review marketing materials and update as needed
- Promote upper story housing in CMX 2.5 zone

Within four or five years

- Invest in a retail market analysis to better understand the Roxborough trade area
- Use the retail market analysis report and other documents to sell the corridor

Marketing and Events Committee

Within one year

- Expand committee membership, create volunteer job descriptions
- Create work plans
- Create new RDC web site, host online calendar for all events on Ridge Ave, create pages for events and maps
- Brand and market the neighborhood and district through public relations, social media, and advertising
- Continue to collect email addresses
- Include all elected/appointed officials/staff on mailing and email lists
- Work with Manayunk Development Corporation on issues of mutual interest
- Review/revise advertising and marketing efforts yearly
- Continue to invest in social media
- Work with a PR consultant to: Grow media list, regularly pitch stories to local, regional, and national outlets and actively advertise RDC events on visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com
- Use both digital and traditional marketing tools to communicate about event happenings

- Help businesses understand Yelp and Trip Advisor customer review platforms
- Continue to feature businesses on various social media platforms
- Communicate with area organizations and institutions
- Promote partner events on social media
- Review all special events and make changes based on key consumer groups
- Conduct simple evaluations of all RDC events
- Create an annual calendar of events and post to website
- Create some new retail events
- Continue to create an annual report
- Invite elected officials to any and all events
- Actively recruit volunteers and publish job descriptions through social media outlets
- Offer training to volunteers, add to volunteer data base, promote volunteer leaders to board/officer positions
- Host an annual volunteer appreciation event

Within two to three years

- Create a joint task force with the civic association to raise funds to create a brand for Roxborough
- Consider creating simple web pages for area businesses without an online presence for a small fee
- Coordinate with other event sponsors and encourage them to make changes based on customer demographics
- Review existing sponsorship and vendor fees and increase some each year
- Create new retail or special events
- Work with Roxborough-Manayunk-Wissahickon Historical Society to determine their interest in working with RDC on: Historic Preservation Month (May) events or activities, promoting corridor history, awards, creating interpretive signage or planning 330 anniversary of Roxborough events in 2020
- Work with partners to offer shopping opportunities before and after their events

Within four or five years

- The volunteer appreciation event is one of the highlights of the Roxborough social season

District Improvement Committee

Within one year

- Expand committee membership, create volunteer job descriptions
- Create work plans
- Create a task force with the Civic Associations about crime and safety
- Continue to monitor crime statistics for Ridge Avenue in the 5th Police District
- Combat misperceptions about the corridor's safety

- Encourage merchants and property owners to participate in any crime or safety programs for commercial corridors.
- Continue to monitor cleanliness of the corridor
- Report vandalism, graffiti etc. to 311 and follow up
- Plan, fund and implement the Ridge Avenue Pocket Park
- Continue to place holiday decorations on the corridor
- Plant mini gardens in existing planters, manage regular watering
- Inventory all parking meters, report broken ones to PPA, work with Councilman's office on aggressive ticketing
- Encourage owners to maintain and restore their buildings, encourage use of SIP
- Provide quality design advice

Within two to three years

- Expand the RDC's street cleaning services in 2016
- Undertake a short survey about cleanliness in 2016
- Work with Tree Philly to replace dead trees and install new trees in any tree pit
- Investigate funding for completion of streetscape
- Identify funding for new way-finding for parking lots

Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote this 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for the Roxborough Development Corporation.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc. a Philadelphia-based Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) boutique consulting firm that provides assistance to non-profit organizations and government agencies nationwide in the following practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation, tourism product development, and non-profit organizational development.

Prior to starting her firm eleven years ago, Ms. Harris was State Coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the Manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure as State Coordinator, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street Communities, led a staff of 12, and managed a budget of over a million dollars.

Since 2004, Ms. Harris has worked with state, countywide and local Main Street programs in 23 States. She has spoken for the last eleven years at the National Main Street Center annual conference, and at the International Downtown Association annual meetings in 2013, 2008 and 2009. Ms. Harris has published six feature articles in the National Main Street Center's quarterly journal *Main Street News* on fundraising, business improvement districts and advocacy. She also writes regularly for The Main Street Story of the Week for the National Main Street Center.

AltaMira Press published her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* in 2007. Ms. Harris is a certified Main Street manager.

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