

FY 2021 forced significant changes to our budget and operations as COVID did for all organizations and departments in the city.

Stamford Downtown completely reorganized its operations and stakeholder engagement to ensure that we were providing the services most needed by our constituents and community for the benefit of the neighborhood and the city.

Significant changes include (new or expanded in black, abandoned or curtailed in red):

- Amended our sanitation program to include sanitizing public facilities including bus stops and crosswalk pedestrian buttons throughout the Downtown
- Added an ambassador exclusively focused on engaging the homeless and population-in-need congregating Downtown to identify needed services and link them with the City and social service providers as appropriate
- Provided greater snow services than in a typical year; Stamford Downtown plows sidewalks throughout the District and hand shovels all the curb cuts including driveways, alleys, and ADA crosswalk ramps
- Partnered with the City Land Use Bureau to craft a new Street Tree Manual
- Expanded our Winter and Holiday Lighting Program along Broad Street and Veterans Memorial Park
- Acted as primary liaison between city and state regulatory agencies and the Downtown restaurants and retailers to inform them of evolving COVID guidelines and rules and did regular site visits to foster compliance resulting in very few violations; supporting city health department currently on restaurant worker vaccination
- Implemented Streateries program including socially distanced Arts and Crafts fairs that added over 1,000 outdoor dining seats above those typically allowed on city sidewalks and marking the difference between restaurant retention and closure; not a single Downtown restaurant has permanently closed as a result of the pandemic
- **Cancelled Wednesday Night Live, Alive@5, Brews on Bedford, and Bark in the Park and other events in FY21, cutting off all of our event revenue streams and sponsorship opportunities; these events will be ramped back up in FY22**
- Will be holding Summer 21 concerts in early FY22 and shifting them to Mill River Park for operational enhancements

COVID restrictions and necessary social distancing are expected to hinder our mission to some degree in FY22, constraining some of our events and ability to draw large crowds Downtown in support of our restaurants and retailers. Based on the hard work by Stamford Downtown and collaboration with our local small businesses, we have fared far better than many communities in retention and occupancy. This is important because occupancy and retention drive rents which underpin value and, ultimately, tax revenue to the city. Revenue will go down in communities with significant COVID-induced business closures.

As the nation incrementally emerges from the pandemic, Stamford Downtown will play a critical role in demonstrating the value of face-to-face interaction, driving demand for retail, restaurants, and offices in the core of our city. That continued demand is integral to the property values of the city's center which comprises a significant share of the city's grand list and personal and real property tax revenue. The city's operating support for our organization has been leveraged by other contributions over twenty-fold, playing an important role in demonstrating the city's commitment to the important role we play in underpinning property values and city revenue.