

RESOLUTION ADOPTING DOWNTOWN VINELAND
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM REVISED
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, 2024.

WHEREAS, in 2021 the City of Vineland applied for and was awarded a Neighborhood Preservation Program (“NPP”) designation for The Ave Downtown Vineland NPP District by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (“NJDCA”); and

WHEREAS this designation includes award funding in the amount of \$125,000 per year for 5 years to begin January 1, 2022, and end December 31, 2026, for Community and Economic Development improvements to The Ave Downtown Vineland Neighborhood target area; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the grant is to design and implement a wide range of initiatives to restore a favorable climate for investment and to improve the quality of life for the residents and businesses of this neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, as a condition of the grant, the NJDCA requires that an annual Implementation Plan be prepared which delineates the planned activities of the NPP program and describes the manner in which the grant funds will be expended. The current plan covers a one-year period (January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024) and has been submitted to the NJDCA for review and approval prior to program implementation; and

WHEREAS, said Plan has been completed pursuant with the required citizen input and other related State mandates and approved by the NJDCA; and,

WHEREAS, the NJDCA has reviewed and approved the Implementation Plan for the Ave Downtown Vineland Neighborhood District for 2024.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council of the City of Vineland does hereby approve The Ave Downtown Vineland Neighborhood District Implementation Plan including the accompanying Budget; and

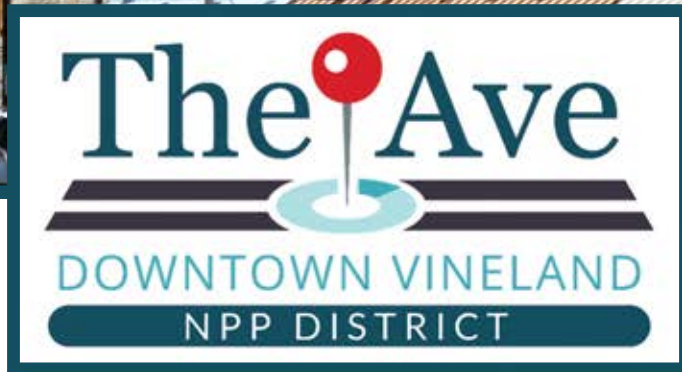
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council is hereby authorized to expend funds in accordance with said Plan.

Adopted:

President of Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk



CITY OF VINELAND

NPP

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM

*District Implementation Plan - Year Three
The Ave Downtown Vineland NPP District*

JANUARY 2024



Vineland’s second year of implementation of The Ave Neighborhood Preservation Plan District was a success. We’ve been pleased with the progress the program has afforded the residents and businesses of the District and have seen greater participation from those in the District.

In our second year, we learned from some of the missteps of our first. For the most part, we realized that we “bit off more than we could chew” in our first year and decided to scale back our programming slightly for our second year. This strategy has proved successful, and we intend for the programming of our third year to be on the same level as our second.



YEAR TWO PROGRAMS

GOAL ONE:

Residential Beautification

GOAL: To create a more welcoming and inviting neighborhood, we’d like to address the aesthetic issues facing the Downtown Vineland NPP District by minimizing the number of residences assessed to be in fair or poor condition.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Residential Façade Renovations

We’ve seen some great successes this year in our Residential Façade Renovation program, having initiated a total of 18 projects, with 15 having been completed and 3 nearing completion within the next few weeks, depending on the weather. We have completely obligated the \$15,000 in NPP funding allocated to this line-item for 2023.

For the most part, we have focused this year’s energies on power washing some of the façades and other street-visible, northern-facing sides of the buildings. With many of the residences in this neighborhood clad in vinyl siding, this initiative has made a huge difference in the appearance of these homes. In addition, we have replaced front-facing windows in many of these homes, as well.

Over the past two years, we’ve built strong relationships with many of the landlords in the District, many of whom own multiple dwellings; however, we’re learning that, while many of the homeowners in the neighborhood welcome the chance to improve their properties, there is a contingent of landlords who would prefer to keep their properties undeveloped in an attempt to keep their property taxes as low as possible. This roadblock is one of the reasons we will be [expanding the footprint of the District](#) in the coming year, in order to bring more homes into the district to target for improvements.

GOAL TWO:

Commercial Development

GOAL: One of the primary goals of any revitalization effort is to bolster the businesses within the District. Finding ways to attract new (and former) customers to the business district of Landis Avenue is essential to the success of this program.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Gift Cards

The Yiftee gift card program continues to be one of our most successful programs, with \$15,000 of NPP funding having been invested in this program. The businesses in the District have greatly appreciated the additional business provided by this program.

Last year, we structured the program such that the customer buys one \$25 gift card, the NPP program will purchase a second \$25 gift card for the customer. This year, we've decided to expand the program to \$50 gift cards, as well.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Feet on the Ave

In this program, we work with a local marketing company to develop very specific, call-to-action digital marketing promotions to promote specific businesses in our NPP district that represent retail, professional services, restaurants, and entertainment. For example, the Landis Theater initiated a buy one-get one free initiative through this program. The NPP district funds the initiative and the marketing thereof, primarily through their social media platforms. The goal of the program is to entice shoppers to visit the NPP District, support our merchants, and increase spending in the District in an attempt to compete with online retailers, big box stores, and mall shoppers.

The first two years of this program have been tremendously successful, with new merchants ready to sign on for the third year of programming. We intend to keep the funding at the same level, with \$25,000 being allocated to this program.

GOAL THREE:

Neighborhood Beautification

GOAL: To create a more welcoming and inviting neighborhood by addressing the aesthetic issues facing the Downtown Vineland NPP District by beautifying the neighborhood's city-owned assets, adding greenery, rehabilitating the city-owned asset of Gonzalez Park, and adding public art in the neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Public Art

The Public Art program saw some extraordinary successes this year. We partnered with Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ, to bring a number of sculptures by the highly regarded founder of Grounds for Sculpture, Seward Johnson.

From July of 2023 to January 2024, each Landis Avenue block within the District hosted a sculpture, with the project accompanied by monthly wrap-around micro-events, designed to complement the sculptures and engage the community in unique ways. As part of the creative journey, all sculptures were featured

on The Ave’s downtown walking trail, known as “Walk The Ave,” offering a journey of exploration and discovery. In addition, we curated a series of walking tours, trolley tours, and other programming to feature the sculptures. An explorer guide and a map were provided to visitors, explaining the stories and inspirations behind each piece. It was truly great to watch the residents and visitors of the District interact with these sculptures, stopping to take a closer look and pose for selfies with the sculptures.

Further, we hosted two free jazz concerts by The Christian Tamburr Sextet at the Landis

Theater which supported and illuminated the sculptures. The first, a daytime show attended by 600 middle school students in the local school district, was, according to the reports of educators, highly effective and engaging for the students, many of whom had never been exposed to jazz – or even the inside of a professional theater – before. The second was held later that night, open to the public. For a Tuesday night, the concert was incredibly well attended, and the spectators were highly impressed, not only with the

quality of the music, but with the integration of physical and performing arts.

In addition, we’ve created a mosaic in the district: the Tree of Life. Designed by a local artist with tiles provided by a local supplier, this piece of art is on the back of the First United Methodist Church of Vineland at 7th and Landis, facing Wood Street. This mural is positioned facing City Hall, serving to beautify a section of the District which welcomes numerous visitors. Recently completed, this mural will be dedicated in the second week of January.

While the Public Art program continues to be one of the most successful of our NPP programs,

Explore The Ave
DOWNTOWN VINELAND
The Ave Sculpture Tour

1
Embracing Peace

2
Los Mariachis

3
Just a Taste

4
Yuck, Go Fetch!

5
Stormy Weather

6
Solo

Seward Johnson was born in New Jersey, and following the auspicious clipping of a newspaper ad for a beginner's sculpture class, became well-known worldwide for his figurative sculptures. Spurred to strengthen communities through his artwork, Seward built an international community of artists with the Johnson Atelier, which continues to weave his sculpture into the fabric of everyday life through music, dance, poetry, food, all the things Seward loved.

It's easy sometimes to forget the simple things that give us pleasure. If we open our eyes, life is marvelous. — Seward Johnson



we are running out of visible places to put murals in the District. This, too, informs our decision to [expand the footprint of the District](#).

OBJECTIVE TWO:

Greenification

This year, we concentrated our Greenification efforts in refilling and regrowing some of the planters along Landis Avenue within the District. We spent the \$3,000 we allocated on this Greenification project, as well as additional funds from the Vineland Downtown Improvement District's funding.

GOAL FOUR:

Commercial Beautification

GOAL: *Sad. Outdated. Boring. Rundown.* These are some of the words that residents and visitors to the Downtown Vineland NPP District use to describe the area. Creating a more inviting commercial corridor is a priority.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Commercial Façade Improvements

This is another hugely successful initiative, with 6 businesses taking part in this program. These projects are either complete or underway, with all \$25,000 allocated to this line item having been obligated in 2023.

However, as with our [Residential Façade Renovations](#) program, we feel we have exhausted many of the interested businesses within the District. This, too, informs our decision to [expand the footprint of the District](#).

YEAR THREE PROGRAMS

GOAL ONE:

Residential Beautification

GOAL: To create a more welcoming and inviting neighborhood, we'd like to address the aesthetic issues facing the Downtown Vineland NPP District by minimizing the number of residences assessed to be in fair or poor condition.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Residential Façade Renovations

While we are incredibly pleased with the direction of this program, we realize that there are some things that need to be addressed in order to continue this success throughout 2024.

For example, as noted [above](#), we have run into issues with a lack of interest in the program from many of the landlords within the District, as they don't want to see their property taxes increased due to improvements to the property. Because of this, we've decided to [expand the footprint of the District](#) in an attempt to involve more residents.

Over the previous two years, we'd focused on stoop rehabilitation and power washing. This year, as we expand the footprint of the District, we intend to continue these programs while encouraging homeowners, landlords, and residents to suggest other repairs as needed. We have allocated \$10,000 of

NPP funding to this program, with another \$3,000 available through owner matches and another \$25,000 from the City's CDBG program, planned to be spent in the District.

GOAL TWO:

Commercial Development

GOAL: One of the primary goals of any revitalization effort is to bolster the businesses within the District. Finding ways to attract new (and former) customers to the business district of Landis Avenue is essential to the success of this program.

OBJECTIVE ONE:

Gift Cards

Considering the unmitigated success that this program has seen, we plan to continue the Yiftee Gift Card program into Year Three, funding it with \$15,000 of NPP funds, with some of those funds earmarked for marketing the program. The funding will be augmented with \$15,000 of matching funds from the participating businesses.

We plan to keep the card denominations the same, with a \$25 gift card purchase gaining a free \$25 gift card and a \$50 gift card purchase earning a free \$50 gift card.

OBJECTIVE TWO:

Feet on the Ave

In Year One, this initiative was funded mid-year through the cancellation of the SCORE BIG program and the Outdoor Dining program, with funding continuing into Year Two. The goal of the program is to entice shoppers to visit the NPP District, support our merchants, and increase spending in the District in an attempt to compete with online retailers, big box stores, and mall shoppers.

In this program, we work with a marketing company to develop very specific, call-to-action digital marketing promotions to promote specific businesses in our NPP district that represent retail, professional services, restaurants, and entertainment. For example, the Landis Theater initiated a buy one-get one free initiative through this program. The NPP district funds the initiative and the marketing thereof, primarily through their social media platforms.

The first two years of this program have proven to be wildly successful, with merchants ready to sign on for a third year of programming. We intend to keep the funding level the same, allocating \$25,000 to the Feet on the Ave initiative in Year Two. While we have incorporated many of the businesses in the current District boundaries into this program, with the [planned expansion of the District](#), we will find a number of other interested businesses.

GOAL THREE:

Neighborhood Beautification

GOAL: To create a more welcoming and inviting neighborhood by addressing the aesthetic issues facing the Downtown Vineland NPP District by beautifying the neighborhood's city-owned assets, adding greenery, rehabilitating the city-owned asset of Gonzalez Park, and adding public art in the neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE ONE:**Public Art**

The public art initiative, begun before the NPP designation, has been incredibly successful, with numerous murals on display throughout the District, particularly along Landis Avenue.

We'd like to continue this program into our third year, with a substantial increase in funding, allocating \$20,000 of NPP funds. Further, this program will leverage \$14,000 in external funding from the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission (CCCHC).

We have several potential plans for these funds and are in near-constant search for ways to encourage the development of the arts in the NPP District. We are currently in discussions with a local sculptor to create a "pin" – similar to the one found in the District logo – to mark the approximate point where Charles K. Landis, founder of the City of Vineland, marked the intersection of Landis Avenue and the Boulevard. Should this project prove infeasible, we have a number of other potential projects that we can pursue.

OBJECTIVE TWO:**Greenification**

We have seen successes with this program, particularly along Landis Avenue and with our successful Arbor Day program. We intend to continue funding this program at the same levels as Years One and Two, with \$3,000 of NPP funding augmented with \$3,000 of funding from the City's Environmental Commission. Much of the Greenification budget for Year Three will be spent at Gonzalez Park, within the District.

GOAL FOUR:**Commercial Beautification**

GOAL: *Sad. Outdated. Boring. Rundown.* These are some of the words that residents and visitors to the Downtown Vineland NPP District use to describe the area. Creating a more inviting commercial corridor is a priority.

OBJECTIVE ONE:**Commercial Façade Improvements**

Throughout Year Two, we'd like to continue the successful commercial façade improvement initiative. As in Year One, the businesses will be required to provide a match, typically in an 80/20 ratio of NPP funds to business match. This year, we will be dedicating \$20,000 of NPP funding to this program and generating another \$5,000 in matching funds from interested businesses.

BUDGET

Program	NPP Funding	External Funding	City Match	External Source	Total
NPP Coordinator Salary			\$79,410		\$79,410
NPP Neighborhood Liaison	\$13,500		\$31,500		\$45,000
Associate Director/ Business Development	\$4,580		\$32,082		\$36,662
Coordinator Fringe			\$8,447		\$8,477
Liaison Fringe	\$6,430		\$15,003		\$21,433

Program	NPP Funding	External Funding	City Match	External Source	Total
Associate Director/ Business Development Fringe	\$490		\$3,217		\$3,707
Personnel Subtotal	\$25,000		\$169,659		\$194,659
Consultant: Tech. Assistance	\$3,500				\$3,500
Residential Beautification: Residential Façades	\$10,000	\$3,000 \$27,000		Match CDBG	\$40,000
Commercial Development: Gift Cards	\$15,000	\$15,000		Business Match	\$30,000
Commercial Development: Feet on the Ave	\$25,000				\$25,000
Neighborhood Beautification: Public Art	\$20,000	\$14,000		CCCHC	\$34,000
Neighborhood Beautification: Greenification	\$3,000	\$3,000		COV Env. Comm.	\$6,000
Commercial Beautification: Commercial Façades	\$20,000	\$5,000		Business Match	\$25,000
PROGRAM SUBTOTAL	\$93,000	\$67,000			\$160,000
Lunch Meetings	\$500				\$500
Marketing	\$3,000				\$3,500
OPERATIONS SUBTOTALS	\$3,500				\$3,500
TOTALS	\$125,000	\$67,000	\$169,659		\$361,659

NPP DISTRICT FOOTPRINT EXPANSION JUSTIFICATION

As discussed throughout this document, we are planning to expand the footprint of the District as exemplified in the map below. There are multiple reasons for our plan.

First, we have hit several roadblocks in finding residential facilities to upgrade. Considering the high rate of renter-occupied dwellings in the current district, it has oftentimes proven difficult to locate the owner of the building to discuss potential projects. While the residents have been very accepting of the programs we have to offer, it's become apparent that many of the owners of these buildings do not wish to engage. However, we are aware that some of the more receptive landlords in the current District boundaries own properties in the planned expansion areas; they have already expressed interest in these programs for those properties.

Second, we are learning that many of the owners of the rental properties in the District do not want to improve their properties, fearing that this will cause their property taxes to increase. As this would negatively affect their profit margin, they choose to keep the property in its current condition. The expansion outlined below includes a considerable number of residences – the northern expansion is nearly all residential –, which would give us a greater number of potential residences to improve.

Third, while the current boundaries of the District contain a the largest concentration of businesses in Downtown Vineland, the western expansion along the western side of Landis Avenue contains a number of businesses as well. Several of the businesses in the western area of Landis Avenue have expressed interest in the Commercial Façade program, and they have traditionally voiced consternation that the programs for Downtown Vineland have typically not included this area. We feel we will likely find a number of businesses that will be interested, not only in the Commercial Façade program, but in the Feet on the Ave and Gift Card programs, as well.

The proposed expansion of the District's footprint aims to address several challenges and capitalize on new opportunities. By expanding the District's boundaries, we can overcome many of the difficulties of residential improvement projects. Additionally, the expansion will include a larger number of residential and commercial properties, which will provide more potential projects to improve. By expanding the District, we can better serve the community and support the growth and development of both residential and commercial properties.

