

2024: Small Business, Big Impact

Montclair Center Annual Recap

mission statement

The mission of the Montclair Center BID is to create a visually appealing, prosperous, and inclusive downtown through continuous cleaning and beautification, programming, marketing, economic development and advocacy.

about

Montclair Center Corp, better known as the Montclair Center Business Improvement District (BID) is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization established in 2002 by the local business community to enhance and promote downtown Montclair as a regional shopping, dining, and entertainment destination. Representing over approximately 500 businesses and 150 property owners along Bloomfield Avenue and nearby adjacent streets, the BID is a Nationally Accredited Main Street Community, recipient of the 2015 Great American Main Street Award and the 2023 Jersey Arts People's Choice Award. The Montclair Center BID partners with businesses, nonprofits, landlords, and government to make Montclair Center a vibrant place to eat, work, shop, live, and play.

partners



awards





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Abhishake Shah, Montclair Center BID Executive Director
and Jackie Apicella, Experience Montclair Director

a message from our executive director

My name is Abhishake (Ah-bee-shake) Shah, and I'm honored to serve as the Executive Director of the Montclair Center BID. Having worked previously as both the Assistant Director and Interim Executive Director; I've had the privilege of seeing firsthand the incredible energy, resilience, and innovation that define our downtown. Leading this remarkable organization into a new chapter is both a privilege and an exciting opportunity.

Over the past year, Montclair Center has continued to flourish, setting new benchmarks for economic growth, tourism, and community engagement. Our summer festivals attracted record-breaking attendance, with Montclair Pride drawing in 30,000 visitors -up from 26,800 in 2024- and the Montclair Jazz Festival welcomed 25,000 attendees, a significant increase from 17,800 in 2024. Alongside the Montclair Film Festival, these flagship events generated an estimated \$4.9 million in local economic impact, reinforcing our status as a premier destination for arts, culture, and commerce.

We also secured over \$300,000 in grant funding, which enabled us to boost our marketing efforts, increase foot traffic, and draw new visitors to Montclair. These funds also helped us enhance the beauty of our downtown, including installing large, sustainable concrete planters to replace aging wooden ones and creating a stunning new mural at 393 Bloomfield Ave., further enriching our vibrant public art scene.

As we look to the future, I envision building on our momentum by strengthening our partnerships with community organizations, nonprofits, and local government to introduce innovative programs in Montclair Center. We are committed to supporting our local businesses through cleaning, beautification, and advocacy, ensuring that Montclair remains an attractive and thriving hub for both entrepreneurs and visitors. By employing modern, data-driven strategies, we will continue to maintain our historically low vacancy rates and foster sustainable economic growth.

The success of Montclair Center relies on the dedication and collaboration of many—our business owners, residents, visitors, and partners. Thank you for your continued support and belief in what makes our downtown special. We will keep Montclair Center at the forefront of innovation, vibrancy, and inclusivity.

Sincerely,

Abhishake Shah

Abhishake Shah
Executive Director, Montclair Center BID

stakeholder support

In 2024, Montclair Center strategically invested in the downtown and the Montclair community. Through a grant from Main Street of New Jersey, we purchased forty new concrete planters that showcase our commitment to sustainability while complimenting the natural beauty and architectural appeal of our public spaces. By adding more greenery, flowers, and seasonal plantings, we're transforming our environment into a more inviting, vibrant, and dynamic setting that enhances the experience for pedestrians.

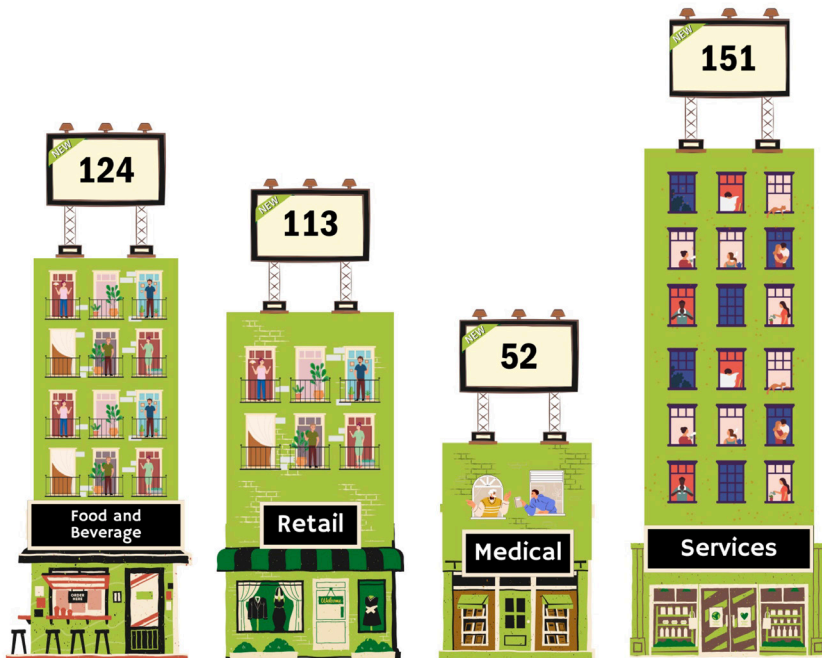
We used additional grant funds to install a new downtown mural at 393 Bloomfield Avenue by muralist Christina Kwan entitled "Radiant Tomorrow." This project captures the dynamic spirit of Montclair and creates a focal point for visitors of the Wellmont Arts Plaza.

Our dedication to creating a vibrant and inclusive downtown goes beyond capital projects. The BID staff engaged in the township's Unhoused Committee and Vision Zero Task Force, to advocate for the needs of our stakeholders and visitors.

The return of the Art Walk brought over 5,000 visitors to the district and showcased over half a million dollars of art from local artists. The Montclair Mezzanine was also chosen as the venue for this year's Downtown NJ conference; reinforcing our reputation as a town of innovation and community.



onward & upward



Montclair boasts many new businesses, particularly in the Arts & Entertainment and Service sectors, which include all new experiential businesses, cementing its long-held reputation as a prime entertainment district.

The current retail mix is healthy, with 124 F&B, 113 Retail, 52 Medical, and 151 Personal and Professional service businesses.

New businesses that opened during 2024

Catfé Montclair	Keep Creating Art	Little Pizza Heaven	Math Momentum
Only Poké	Wellness Center	Insomnia	Morimoto
Ellie Mental Health	Montclair Mezzanine	Silantro Taco Truck	BFT Montclair
The It Girl Massage Therapy	Rumble Boxing Gym	Aura Head Spa	Sweet Jamaica Cafe
Lash & Brow By Chris	Sol Spirit Yoga and Wellness	NutriCultures	Mashed Burgers
The Space	The Juice House	Black Box Franchising	Feminink
Nuts and Delights	Hey Yogurt!	Mister	L&B Grooming and Dog Wash
Center Stage Gallery	Lyons Pizza Fried Chicken	Lifestylz Event Space	Creations from Heaven
Houss Freya	Best Friend Photography	Le French Dad (New owner)	Floral Boutique
Tasca	Cameron Animal Rescue	Lit Café	Sardela
Dhamaal	Tastee Platters Halal Grill	Chashni	Sando Kitchen and Cafe
16 Handles	Dear Body Montclair	Chicken and Shawarma	Rec Room
Retro Fitness	Diesel and Duke	Express	
Montclair Convenience	Francis Henri	Lackawanna Station	
Milk N Cookies	Smoothie King	Tony Boys Sandwich House	
Acorn General Store	Maayana:	Next Level Physio	
Izzy's Boxing	Lulu's Truck	Tous Le Jours	

- 48% food & beverage
- 35% services
- 10% retail
- 3% arts & entertainment
- 3% nonprofits

business and vacancy data

60

new businesses. Up from
49 in 2023

~168

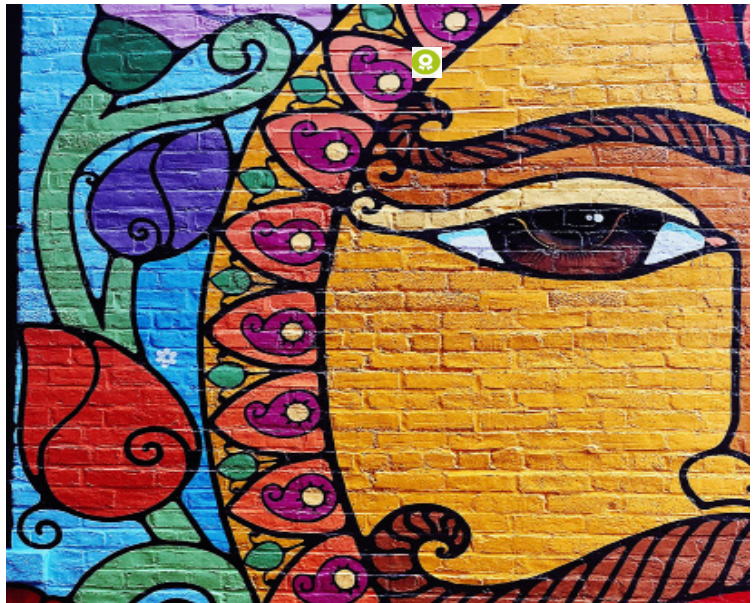
new jobs created

27

closed businesses. Up
from 16 in 2023

3.8%

ground floor vacancy,
down from 6% in 2023



The 2024 Montclair Center BID report presents encouraging trends in local business and economic health. Downtown saw 60 new businesses opened, up from 49 in 2023, showing an entrepreneurial spirit contributing to job creation, with approximately 168 new jobs.

A notable decrease in vacancies, reducing the rate to 3.8% from 6.03% in 2024, indicates a more robust downtown community in high demand. Local businesses' substantial \$7.2 million investment demonstrates strong confidence and commitment to growth. In 2024, the Montclair Center BID achieved notable milestones: hosting 14 ribbon-cutting events, supporting the township's Unhoused Committee and Vision Zero Task Force, and hosting a downtown candidates forum encouraging civic engagement and putting stakeholder issues at the forefront of the municipal election.

Source: Data From Montclair Center
BID and Main Street of NJ

foot traffic data



7.5 million

visits from January to December 2024. Up from 7.4 million in 2023

1.6 million

unique visitors to the BID, same as 2023

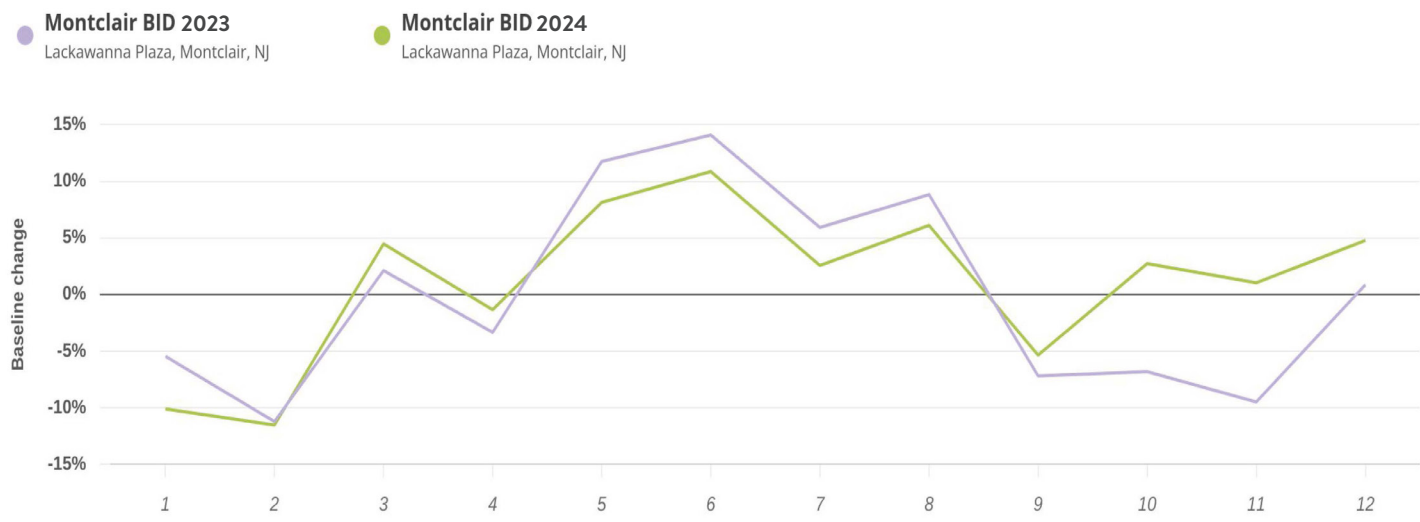
~40,000

visitors for Pride Festival, Montclair Center's busiest day of 2024.

118 minutes

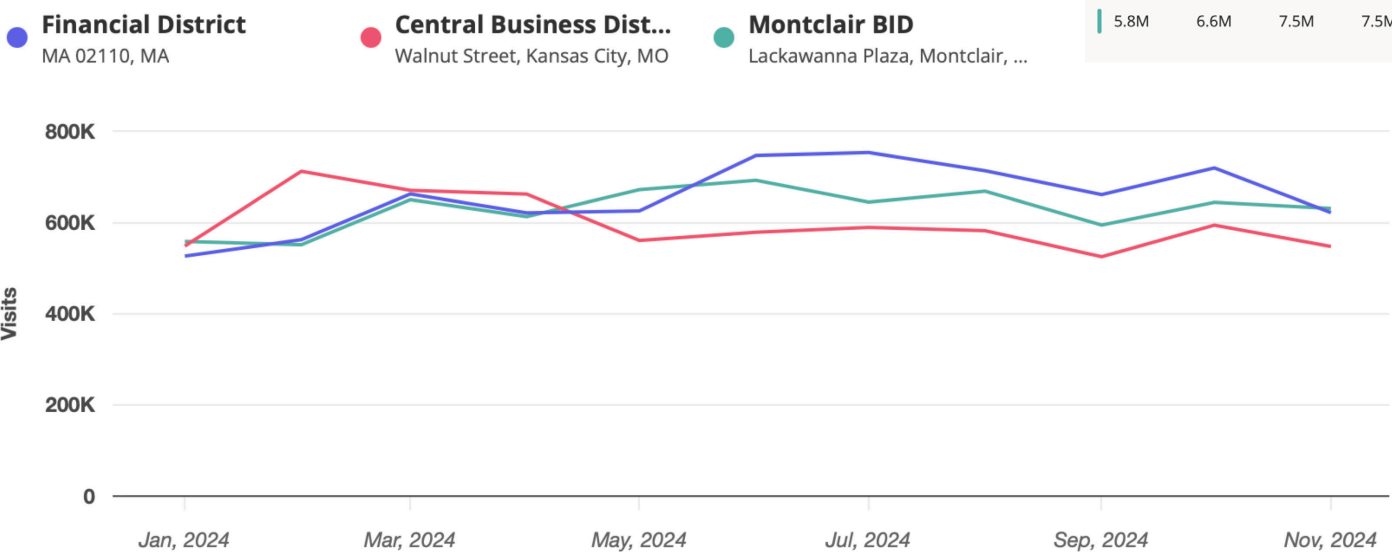
average dwell time for each visitor to Montclair Center in 2024. Down from 137 in 2023.

visit trends



Monthly | Baseline change
Montclair BID - Jan 1st, 2023 - Dec 31st, 2023
Montclair BID - Jan 1st, 2024 - Dec 31st, 2024
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. (www.placer.ai)

	2021	2022	2023	Last 12 Months
Financial District	5.3M	7M	7.4M	7.8M
Central Business District	5.9M	7.3M	7.6M	7.1M
Montclair BID	5.8M	6.6M	7.5M	7.5M



* Data from Placer.ai

destination marketing



Experience Montclair is New Jersey's official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the greater Montclair Region. A DMO is dedicated to promoting specific areas, such as cities, regions, or countries, as appealing travel destinations. Its primary aim is to boost visitor numbers, which in turn benefits local businesses and enhances the economy.

The Montclair Center Corporation applied for a Destination Marketing grant to raise awareness and spark interest in Montclair as a vibrant and unique destination. We chose the name Experience Montclair as an invitation for everyone to explore our neighborhoods, meet our people, savor our culture, and enjoy our hospitality.

In 2024, our expanding DMO, Experience Montclair, seized numerous opportunities to establish itself as New Jersey's newest DMO. We focused on driving more visi-

tors to our community. This year, we celebrated a remarkable 210% increase in followers on Experience Montclair's Instagram page.

We launched a captivating autumn marketing campaign titled "Fall in Love with Montclair: 100 Reasons to Fall in Love with Montclair." This campaign showcased over 100 exciting events happening throughout the fall season in 2024. The advertisement was seen at several NJ Transit stops across New York and New Jersey.

Montclair Center BID also teamed up with three major festivals: Montclair Film, Jazz, and Pride. Each year, festival attendance increased by approximately 20%. Festivalgoers contributed nearly \$5 million to the local economy, and for every \$1 invested by the BID, the community saw a return of \$33.

community event attendance



Montclair Center BID partnered with three major festivals, Montclair Film, Montclair Jazz and Pride.

\$4.9M

total spent in local businesses during the three major downtown festivals

\$33.09

returned per each \$1 spent by the BID in the three major festivals

18,000

attendees to the Montclair Film Festival

30,000

attendees to Montclair Pride, up 12% from 26,800 in 2023

25,000

attendees to the Montclair Jazz Festival Jamboree Finale

\$68

spent per visitor during festivals

* Data from Jazz House Kids, OUT Montclair and Montclair Film

supporting local events



In addition to the three major festivals, the Montclair Center team contributes to building our local community by extending various forms of support to other events, such as advocacy, in-kind economic assistance, staffing assistance, marketing and advertisement, technical support, and event coordination.

BID events

winter wonderland
shop small saturday
downtown trick or treating
meet and greet events
annual meeting
art walk
summer sunday

private events

juneteenth
make music day
three kings day
latinos of montclair
dia de los muertos



transparency

Montclair Center BID Budget	
Revenue	
BID Assessment	\$ 1,065,905
Polaris	\$ 10,000
Banner Income	\$ 2,000
Grant Income	
DMO	\$ 144,000
Main Street & Other	\$ 105,000
Advertising Income (DMO)	\$ 20,000
Interest Income	\$ 3,000
Rental Income	\$ 10,382
Total Revenue	\$ 1,360,287
Programming Expenses	
Maintenance & Improvements	\$ 359,463
Destination Marketing Organization Costs	\$ 180,000
Events & Programs	\$ 372,488
Strategic Initiatives	\$ 60,000
Total Programming Expenses	\$ 971,951
General Administrative	
General Administrative	\$ 395,087
Total General Administrative	\$ 395,087
Total Operating Expense	\$ 1,367,058
Net Income (Change in Net Assets)	\$ (6,771)

Montclair Center Coporation generates revenue from several sources such as the BID Assessment paid by property owners within the district, income from our banner program and grants such as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Grant, amounting to \$1,360,287 and total expenditures for \$1,367,058, with a total net loss of \$6,771.

cleaner, greener, brighter

5,924

total bags of pedestrian
generated litter

4,019

bags from BID trash
receptacles

11,445

curbside bags picked up
by trash haulers

29,620

Total lbs. picked, or 14.8 tons

2,183

stickers, tags and unsolicited
ads removed

Source: Commercial District Services



staff

Abhishake Shah, Executive Director
Jackie Apicella, Marketing Director & Director of DMO
Aysa Gordon, Administrative Assistant
Lauren Barnas, Communication Coordinator

Commercial District Services

Jerry Rafalovich, Operations Manager
Jimmy Volpi, Supervisor
Ricky Commander, Ambassador
Dillon McQuaid, Ambassador
Malkeet Singh, Ambassador
John Smith, Ambassador

2024 board

PRESIDENT: Jaji Packard – The Crescent Shops
VICE PRESIDENT: Ernst Goldman – 4Evergrafix
SECRETARY: Kristen Zachares – The Eclectic Chic Boutique
TREASURER: Matt Horrigan – Horrigan Development
ASSISTANT TREA/SEC: Matt Silverman - Local Resident

Te’Nijah Bussey — Art is Bond/The Loft
Mary Cumella — Gioia Mia
Emer Featherstone — Montclair Foundation
Stacey File — The MC Hotel
Daniel Garcia-Pedrosa — Pedrosa – Pymstone Realty
Neil Grabowsky- Grabowsky Development
Rachael Grochowski - RHG Architect + Design
Natalie Haddad - Monty/Mister
Jill Montague – Montclair Film
Jacob Nieman- Montclair Planning Board
David Placek – BDP Holdings, LLC
Liz Rich — Feliciano Center for Entrepreneurship at MSU
Brian Silver — The Bravitas Group
Nat Testa — The Natlor Group
Aminah Toler — 4th Ward Councilor
Rahum Williams — 3rd Ward Councilor



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