



Business Districts, Inc. is the premier provider of commercial area development services for mid-sized municipalities. Business areas are as varied as the communities which create and benefit from them. Whether they are downtowns, industrial parks, or retail corridors, commercial areas announce and transmit the values of the communities they dwell in. Effective commercial development has always relied on analysis-based strategic plans affirmed by community groups, businesses, and government. However, with increasingly tight municipal budgets, growing citizen involvement and changing patterns of life, work and shopping today, an effective commercial plan must be more; it must include organization

structures--private public partnerships or designation of lead agencies--and reliable financing mechanisms. In other words, today, an effective commercial development plan must include implementation.

For a decade and a half, BDI has developed and implemented effective commercial area plans in top communities throughout the Midwest. We have created thriving, marquee projects which attest to both community resilience and BDI skill in ensuring long term results. With deep roots in urban planning, commercial development, and business management, and a flexible, hands-on approach, BDI empowers those developing a commercial district to define, progress toward and realize their business aspirations. The results are often dramatic.

At the core of BDI's services is the situation audit; a "where-do-we-go-from-here" diagnosis of a commercial district's economic and physical conditions as well as its market demographics, business mix and prevailing codes. From this analysis, BDI constructs a strategic plan. Using "visioning" workshops with constituent groups and the public and also expert input, the community will create a fully implementable operation plan. Business support and developer recruitment are the cornerstones of the plan as are staffing, management and continuing services.

Developing a commercial district that answers community expectations and city revenue needs within municipal budget and scheduling parameters has never been more challenging. Yet never has it been more rewarding. Today's commercial district is not just an economic entity but an emotional and social one. It's a gathering place that connects a community's past and future and affirms its values and cultural identity. Let BDI help you develop yours.

## ***Selected Project Experience***

---



### **South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association**



Since 2000, BDI has been advising the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) as it undertakes economic development initiatives designed to improve the quality of life in Chicago's south suburbs. This effort takes a regional approach as it organizes a "Corridors of Tomorrow" program to capitalize on the opportunities inherent in the strong transportation corridors traversing the south suburbs. BDI's assignments have included the Calumet Corridor, the Lincoln Highway Corridor, the Metra Electric Corridor, the I-80 Corridor, and the Harlem Avenue Corridor. Numerous implementation initiatives have followed these

studies ranging from industrial parks in Sauk Village to office centers in Park Forest. The main focus of current programming is developing the Calumet River system as a regional asset hosting manufacturing, residential, commercial, and recreational uses.

#### *Client Contact*

Ed Paesel  
Executive Director  
South Suburban Mayor's and Manager's Association  
1904 West 174<sup>th</sup> Street  
East Hazel Crest, IL  
708 922-4670

### **South Bend, Indiana**

BDI has been advising South Bend's Development staff since 1996. There have been six commercial corridor plans in a sequential program to revitalize South Bend's aging retail districts and an Economic Development Action Plan for the Revitalization of Downtown South Bend. The major Downtown South Bend emphasis was the integration of more than 20 previous studies into a comprehensive physical and economic development vision that capitalized on the existing market and important physical assets, like the St. Joseph River with its kayak run. BDI was instrumental in the creation of a public-private partnership organization that has organized a strong downtown management program.



#### *Client Contact:*

Don Inks  
Director of Economic Development  
City of South Bend  
1200 County-City Building  
South Bend, IN 46601  
(574) 235-9339

## ***Selected Project Experience***

---



### **Mountain Brook, Alabama**

One of most affluent cities in the United States is Mountain Brook, Alabama; a community planned by Olmstead's landscape firm in the 1920's and located just outside of Birmingham. In 2005, BDI was retained to complete an Economic Development Plan for the City of Mountain Brook that capitalized on it existing commercial Villages and Office Park. That project involved analyzing existing conditions and creating a "road map" to a future where these community assets both increased their contribution to city revenue and provided superior service to residents. This project was completed in January 2007. It



has lead to community consensus on the desirability of varying uses and an understanding of how historic preservation fits into the fabric of a community.

*Client Contact:*

Sam Gaston  
City Manager  
City of Mountain Brook  
56 Church Street  
Box 130009 Crestline Heights Branch  
Mountain Brook, AL 35213  
(205) 802-3800

### **Itasca, IL**

Although Itasca's Downtown currently is modest, the community has great potential in the redevelopment of nearby aging industrial and commercial properties. In 2004, BDI created a Downtown Development Strategy that included a detailed action plan for realizing the community's vision. BDI has supported implementation of that plan by advising the newly created Downtown Itasca Advisory Committee. Since that plan was adopted, BDI has guided that committee as it took the community's vision for a riverfront restaurant in the former Village Hall from idea to negotiated developer agreement and completed a historic preservation program for the best of Itasca's vintage properties. BDI continues to advise Village staff as they aggressively implement additional aspects of the Downtown Development Strategy.

*Client Contact:*

David Williams  
Village Administrator  
Village of Itasca  
550 W. Irving Park Road  
Itasca, IL 60143  
(630) 773-5575



### ***Terrence M. Jenkins***

#### **Managing Director**

#### **Experience**

For 12 years, Mr. Jenkins served as Executive Director of EvMark, the downtown management organization for the City of Evanston. Working in concert with the public/private corporation board of directors, Mr. Jenkins was fully responsible for the creation of annual goals and objectives. He was accountable to the volunteer board for the achievement of programming to attain those objectives.

Under Mr. Jenkins' direction, EvMark completed the development and implementation of a comprehensive physical plan for the forty-block area of downtown Evanston. This innovative plan was developed by a unique partnership of four local, prominent urban planning and design firms; EvMark board of directors, City of Evanston staff and elected officials, retailers, landowners, representatives of the arts, and the general public. Through Mr. Jenkins' efforts, EvMark became a model for achieving results through an efficient part-time management process in concert with an equally efficient use of professional subcontractors to achieve complete program objectives. Prior to his association with EvMark, Terry Jenkins was Senior Vice President of Washington National Insurance Company. He held marketing and administrative responsibilities for multiple lines of business that encompassed \$41 million in budgets, \$80 million in premium income and a staff of six hundred.

In addition to operating responsibilities, Mr. Jenkins was responsible for external relations with the community, including downtown Evanston and other business districts. While with Washington National, Mr. Jenkins served as the President of the Evanston Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Jenkins' responsibilities with EvMark, Washington National and the Chamber of Commerce have provided him with a unique balance of experience. He has been involved in public/private downtown management, a corporate view of investment in the future of business districts, and line experience with the Chamber of Commerce in articulating its role in business district management and development.

Having served on various committees and boards during the past twenty years, Mr. Jenkins has developed a strong understanding of the role of volunteer and not-for-profit efforts within a community. Mr. Jenkins served as Chairman of the United Way, was President of Evanston's Comprehensive Drug Treatment Program, and has served as President of the Evanston School Project Earn and Learn. Mr. Jenkins was a member of the Evanston Committee on the Homeless. Mr. Jenkins is a faculty member of the Leadership Evanston

Utilizing this experience, Mr. Jenkins founded Business Districts, Inc in 1992 and a sampling of the multitude of services provided to a very diverse group of communities are listed below.

#### **Education**

Mr. Jenkins is a graduate of Northern Illinois University (1969). He has received a Fellowship in the Life Office Management Association. Mr. Jenkins is also a Chartered Life Underwriter and is a graduate of the Life Office Management Association Executive School.



***Terrence M. Jenkins***

**Selected Experience**

***Corridor Development Action Plans***

Roosevelt Road, Broadview, IL; Madison Street, Forest Park, IL; Front Street, Mokena, IL; South Gateway, South Bend, IN; Western Avenue, South Bend, IN; Lincoln Way, South Bend, IN; Portage Avenue, South Bend, IN; Calument Corridor, Harlem Avenue Corridor, Route 30 Corridor, Metra Electric Corridor; Roosevelt Road, Berkeley, IL; The Calument River Corridor; Sauganash Neighborhood, Chicago, IL.

***Downtown***

Aurora, IL; Burlington, IA; Muscatine, IA; Quincy, IL; Rockford, IL; Lake Forest, IL; Lake Bluff, IL; South Bend, IN; Winnetka, IL; Blue Island, IL; Grayslake, IL; Elkhorn, WI; Park Ridge, IL; Homewood, IL; Evanston, IL; Highland Park, IL; Itasca, IL; Woodstock, IL; Zion, IL; Hazel Crest, IL; Mequon, WI; Plymouth, IN; Champaign, IL; Thornton, IL; Kenosha, WI; Midlothian, IL; East Dundee, IL; Steger, IL; Western Springs, IL; Canton, IL; Macomb, IL; Richton Park, IL; Sugar Grove, IL.

***Supportive Services***

Roosevelt Road, Broadview, IL; Front Street, Mokena, IL; Downtown South Bend, South Bend, IN; Quincy, IL; Champaign, IL; Itasca, IL; Grayslake, IL; Elkhorn, WI; Park Ridge, IL; Homewood, IL; Evanston, IL; Zion, IL; Hazel Crest, IL; Plymouth, IL; Thornton, IL; over fifty communities under the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association.

***Special Studies and Projects***

The Cook County Assessor's Tax Reactivation Program; St. Charles, IL; Maywood, IL; Champaign, IL; Bloomingdale, IL; Lakewood, IL; Sugar Grove, IL; Fort Harrison, IN; Tinley Park, IL; Carpentersville, IL; Detroit, MI; Columbia, SC.

### ***Bridget Lane***

#### **Director**

#### **Experience**

Bridget Lane specializes in commercial revitalization strategy, fiscal impact analysis, market analysis, and retail business development. Her ten years of experience as a retailing executive, seven years as a professor at Chicago's DePaul University and three years managing Downtown Evanston serve as a practical foundation for her market research and business development consultations.

Recent clients included communities as diverse as Lake Forest, Illinois; Mountain Brook, Alabama; and Noblesville, Indiana. Bridget also has led retail business recruitment efforts and workshops in business development for community development leaders. At the request of Plainfield, Illinois, she analyzed the impact of a proposed 250 unit residential development. She developed store audits for a major upscale man's clothier, created a retail store concept for a successful wholesaler, and developed the marketing strategy for a newly created tax-exempt foundation. Bridget conducts the basic research and analysis necessary to create business development and marketing strategies, moderates focus groups, and develops consumer surveys.

Residential development impacts, industrial recruitment, neighborhood retail business development, and mixed use project enhancement have all been subjects of Bridget's research and consulting work. She created university courses covering retail management, advertising, introductory marketing and personal selling.

Bridget began her retailing career at Jb Robinson Jewelers, where she had line responsibility for sales and profits in the company's largest region. She also sat on the executive committee charged with policy development during the company's rapid expansion. She developed sales, expense and profit budgets. New store location, display, and start-up were under her supervision. She implemented employee hiring and development programs.

Earlier in her career, Bridget served as a public and legislative relations coordinator for the Illinois Department of Conservation. She was also a preservation planner at the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States.

#### **Affiliations**

Bridget Lane has served on various committees and boards during the past 15 years, including a term on her community's Economic Development Corporation and a position as Trustee of the District 64 Elementary Learning Foundation.

#### **Education**

Before obtaining a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School, Bridget graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in Urban Planning.

### ***Bridget Lane***

#### **Selected Experience**

##### ***Downtown and Corridor Business Development Action Plans***

Downtown Plano, IL; Downtown Yorkville, IL; Sugar Grove, IL; Addison, IL; Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, IL; Marengo, IL; Downtown Romeoville, Romeoville, IL; Downtown Mequon/Thiensville, Mequon, WI; Downtown Matteson, Matteson, IL; Downtown Plainfield, Plainfield, IN; Calumet Corridor, Harlem Avenue Corridor, and Lincoln Avenue Corridor, Route 30 Corridor, Metra Electric Corridor, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; Downtown Zion, IL; Massachusetts Avenue, Indianapolis, IN; Route 30, North Aurora, IL; East Dundee, IL; Frankfort, IL; Downtown Burlington, Burlington, IA; Madison Street, Forest Park, IL; Roosevelt Road, Broadview, IL; Downtown Quincy, Quincy, IL; Downtown Rockford, Rockford, IL; Downtown Roselle, Roselle, IL; Front Street, Mokena, IL; Downtown Lake Forest, Lake Forest, IL; South Gateway, South Bend, IN; Downtown Lake Bluff, Lake Bluff, IL; Downtown South Bend, South Bend, IN; Lincoln Way West, South Bend, IN; Western Avenue, South Bend, IN; Downtown Winnetka, Winnetka, IL; Portage Avenue, South Bend, IN; Downtown Grayslake, Grayslake, IL; Downtown Elkhorn, Elkhorn, WI., Oakland Street, Shorewood, WI; 31<sup>st</sup> Street, LaGrange Park, IL; Downtown Long Grove Comprehensive Plan, Long Grove, IL; Downtown DeKalb Plan; DeKalb, IL; Fort Benjamin Harrison Reuse; Lawrence, IN; Villages Economic Development Plan, Mountain Brook, AL.

##### ***Store Development***

Naper Settlement, Naperville, IL; I Dream in Color, Hyde Park, Chicago, IL; New Balance Shoes, Highland Park, IL; Bountiful Board, Lincoln Park, Chicago, IL; Aubrey's of Barrington, Barrington, IL; Franklin Products, Chicago, IL; Bigsby & Kruthers, Chicago, IL.

##### ***Retailer Development Workshops***

###### *Topics:*

Making an Old Store Look Good; 50 Ideas to Jump-Start Your Holiday Sales; Get More Bang for Your Advertising Buck; Power-up Your Staff to Sell More; Low Cost Loss Prevention; You Can Control Your Inventory; 50 Tips that Build Store Profits.

###### *Communities:*

Libertyville, IL; Blue Island, IL; Nappanee, IN; Evanston, IL; Glen Ellyn, IL; Homewood, IL; Highland Park, IL; Park Ridge, IL; Hyde Park, Chicago, IL; Woodstock, IL.; DeKalb, IL

##### ***Community Surveys***

Kenilworth, IL; Rockford, IL; Broadview, IL; Clarendon Hills, IL; Park Ridge, IL; Olympia Fields, IL; Hampshire, IL.; Plainfield, IL, LaGrange Park, IL

##### ***College Level Courses Developed***

Introduction to Marketing  
Personal Selling  
Retail Management  
Advertising  
Advertising Campaigns



### ***Diane Williams***

#### **Director**

#### **Experience**

Diane Williams joined Business Districts, Inc. with a unique combination of public and private sector experiences and skills. In addition to her work with Business Districts, Inc., Diane currently serves as the Executive Director of Evmark, the downtown marketing and management organization in Evanston, Illinois.

Previously, Diane served as the Assistant State Coordinator for Illinois' statewide Main Street program. While with Illinois Main Street, Diane provided technical and consultative services on commercial district economic issues to Illinois' nearly 60 local Main Street programs. Diane's work with these local organizations encompassed downtown strategy development, market data assessments, market opportunity assessments, financial incentive development, local program evaluation and historic preservation issues.

Prior to pursuing graduate studies in historic preservation, Diane Williams was a Vice President at Citibank in Chicago. She has twenty-one years of banking experience, including thirteen as a commercial banker to the small business market. During her banking career, Diane had varied opportunities, including managing a start-up small business banking unit, selling banking services to small business owners, developing new market strategies, directing new product introductions, and conducting training for new bankers.

#### **Education**

Diane has a Bachelor's degree from Rosary College, now Dominican University, in River Forest, Illinois and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has completed undergraduate business courses at Northwestern University and M. B. A. coursework at DePaul University. Diane is also a graduate of the National Main Street Center's Certification Institute in commercial district revitalization.

#### **Selected Experience**

##### **Downtown Action Plans and Downtown Project Specific Work**

Evanston, IL; South Bend, IN; Plymouth, IN; Clare, MI; Royal Oak, MI; Matteson, IL; Thornton, IL; Libertyville, IL; Madison, WI; Plano, IL; Plainfield, IL; Elmhurst, IL; South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association; Long Grove, IL; Itasca, IL; Crete, IL; Naper Settlement, Naperville, IL; Oak Park, IL; Moline, IL; Cook County, IL; Clare, MI; Stevens Point, WI; Crystal Lake, IL; Ishpeming, MI; Sugar Grove, IL; Rockton, IL; DeKalb, IL; Syracuse, NY; Sherman, NY; Bath, NY.

Diane has presented at Chicago area economic development conferences and at national and state Main Street meetings on successful financial incentive programs and on the mechanics of developing downtown economic strategies.