

A BID for Urban Regeneration

*How Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation can be leveraged by
Business Improvement Districts to Strengthen the Local Economy of
Underserved Communities*



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Disclaimer

This study has been prepared for the Laurel District Association, in Oakland, California. The student author conducted this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Policy and Master of Business Administration at Mills College. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Mills College Public Policy Program, the sponsoring Client organization, or any other organization or agency.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper to inform the Laurel District Association's Executive Director, Board of Directors, and member businesses of potential services and funding opportunities that increase the quality of the customer experience and help position the Laurel District as a vibrant commercial district. Through a comprehensive organizational evaluation, policy analysis, and best practices research, a district vision has been developed that retains the core community values of local ownership, cultural significance and increase community participation.

The best practices research examines nine district models and several independent Business Improvement District models that offer strategies and programs centered on sustainability, resilience, and innovation that can help build a unique district identity and position the Laurel District for state and local policies that influence land-use.

Ultimately, the strategies and programs recommended were selected because they represent place based solutions that best reflect the Laurel's community values.

These strategies and programs include: free District WiFi, enhanced public art, streamlined permitting, establishing a framework for a healthy business mix, and advocating for the inclusion in local, regional, and federal sustainability funding.

Once additional funding is secured, affordable housing, district solar, and green streets features should be added to the LDA's scope.