

Transformative Development Initiative

An **Accelerator** of Economic Opportunities for People and Places in **Gateway Cities**



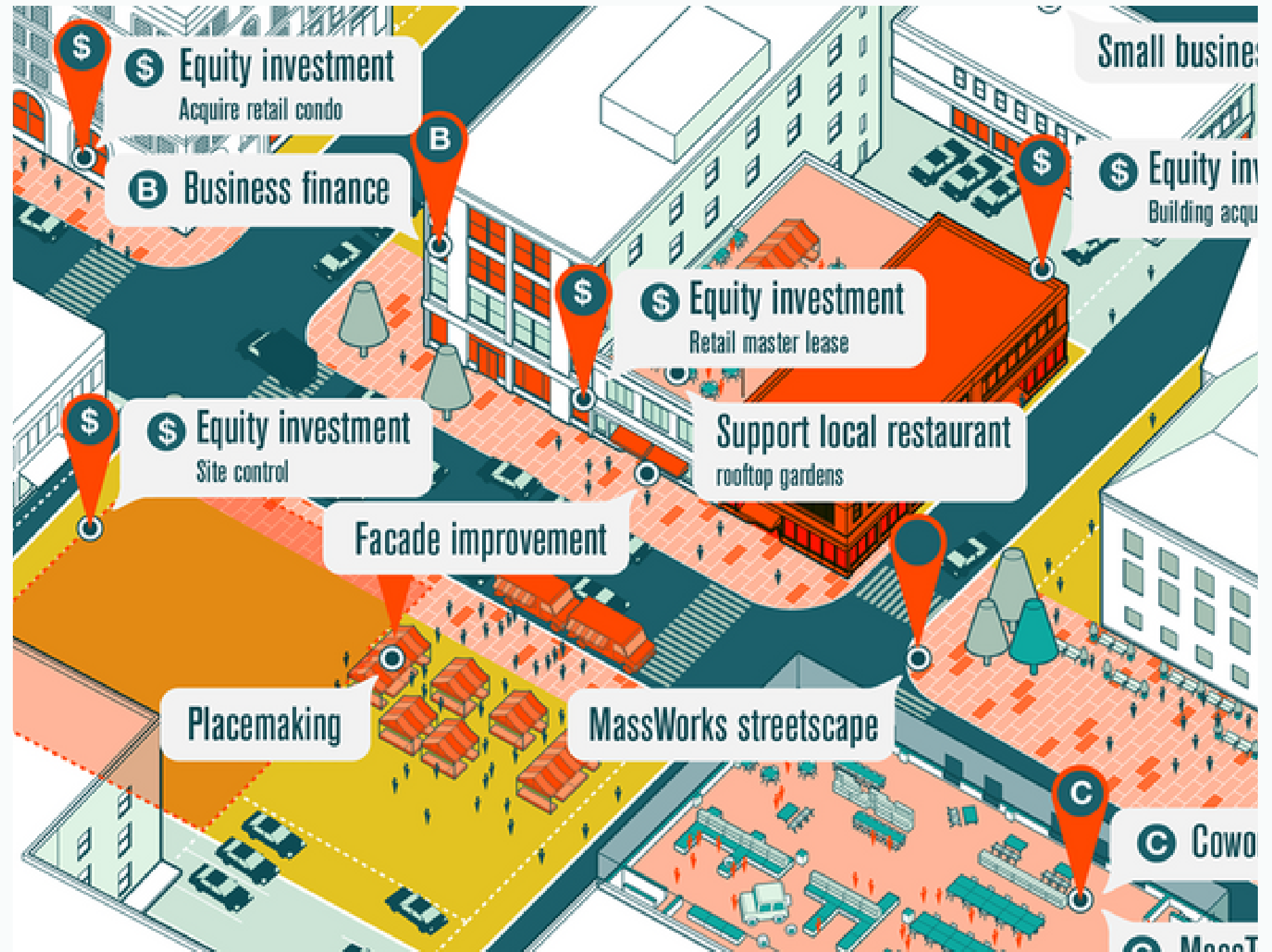
What does TDI do?

...and Why?

Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) = *Place-based revitalization accelerator*

Rooted in **People, Place, and Networks**

TDI is a program of MassDevelopment designed to catalyze growth in Massachusetts Gateway Cities





TDI Co-Investment

Selected Districts receive:

- A 3-year program commitment
- A TDI Fellow - a midcareer economic development professional who will serve as a local facilitator for the duration of the TDI commitment, fully paid for by MassDevelopment
- Custom Technical Assistance
- Access to grants designated ONLY for your District (non-competitive & competitive grants)

TDI Approach & Tools

TDI helps activate Gateway Cities' downtowns and commercial districts by supporting local partnerships, building trust, local capacity to implement projects, attracting public/private investment, while fostering economic growth

People Impact

*Capacity & Expertise
Building Tools*

TDI Fellows - MassDev full-time employees placed in selected districts. They provide expertise and create collaborative leadership

Adjunct Fellow - Additional capacity that could be hired locally to support the overall goals of the District set forth by the TDI Fellow and Partnership

Technical Assistance - Access to technical experts and consultants who work on local priority projects that enhance the revitalization of a TDI District and its surroundings

Network Impact

*Partnership Development +
Creative Industry Initiatives*

Network organizing - the fellow, along with the TDI team, cultivates a network of cross-sector stakeholders, "the partnership," to facilitate district transformation

TDI Creative Cities - Designed for graduated TDI Districts to cultivate the Art and Culture sector by bolstering a robust network of local creatives. Funded by the Barr Foundation

Creative Catalyst Grants - Grants between \$20,000 and \$100,000 to support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization

Place Impact *Commercial Districts Growth*

TDI Local - Grants to foster business, resident, and property owner engagement and build community identity while improving the public realm

Cohort Project - flexible funds for unique "pet projects" that don't fit neatly into a programmatic box, innovative thinking, and initiatives to test new approaches

TDI Equity - Grants to catalyze the Real Estate market demand and support TDI district goals through the transformation of commercial properties in and around TDI districts



01. CAPACITY/LEADERSHIP

First year focused on relationship-building and community engagement, with capacity growth occurring closer to the offboarding phase (years 2–3)

01. CAPACITY/LEADERSHIP

A comprehensive onboarding process during the partnership development stage

02. SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Grants and resources through fellow guidance. Limited sector-specific programming

02. ENHANCED SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMMING

Beyond grants, provide operations and organizational support to targeted small businesses to allow growth and scalability

03. DISTRICT EXCLUSIVITY

Focused primarily **on individual district support with minimal cross-district collaboration** or peer learning

03. TIERED TOUCH-POINTS

“TDI Network” is a **peer learning platform for current and graduated TDI districts** across (28) Gateway Cities.

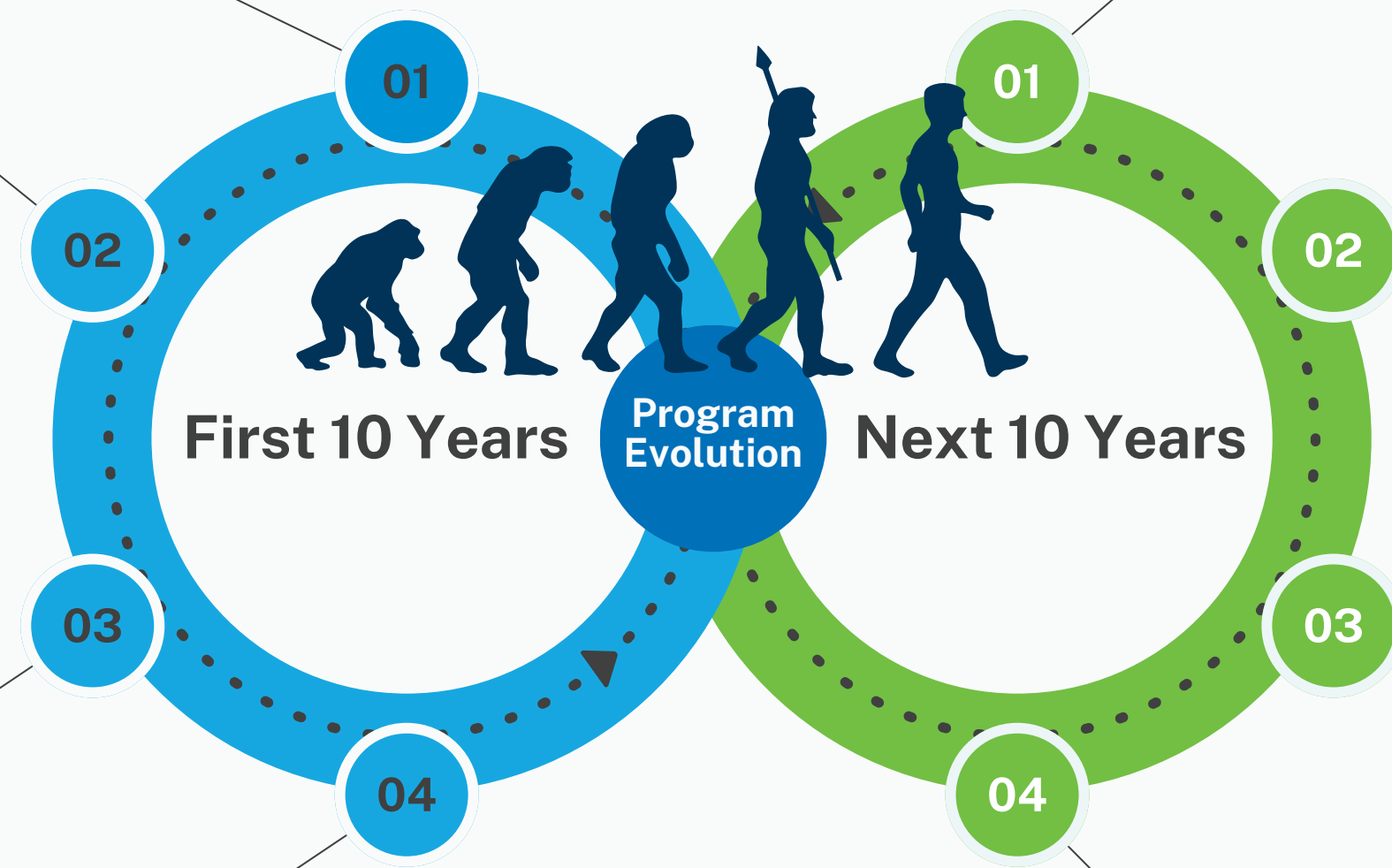
Less dependency on TDI tools

04. DATA/STORYTELLING

Outcomes were **measured** anecdotally, with actual **resources or investments deployed** & leveraged

04. DATA/STORYTELLING

Defined KPIs and impact measures. Proactive overhaul of admin systems, program reports with centralized data systems





**New
District**



**Graduated
and New
District**



**Graduate
District**

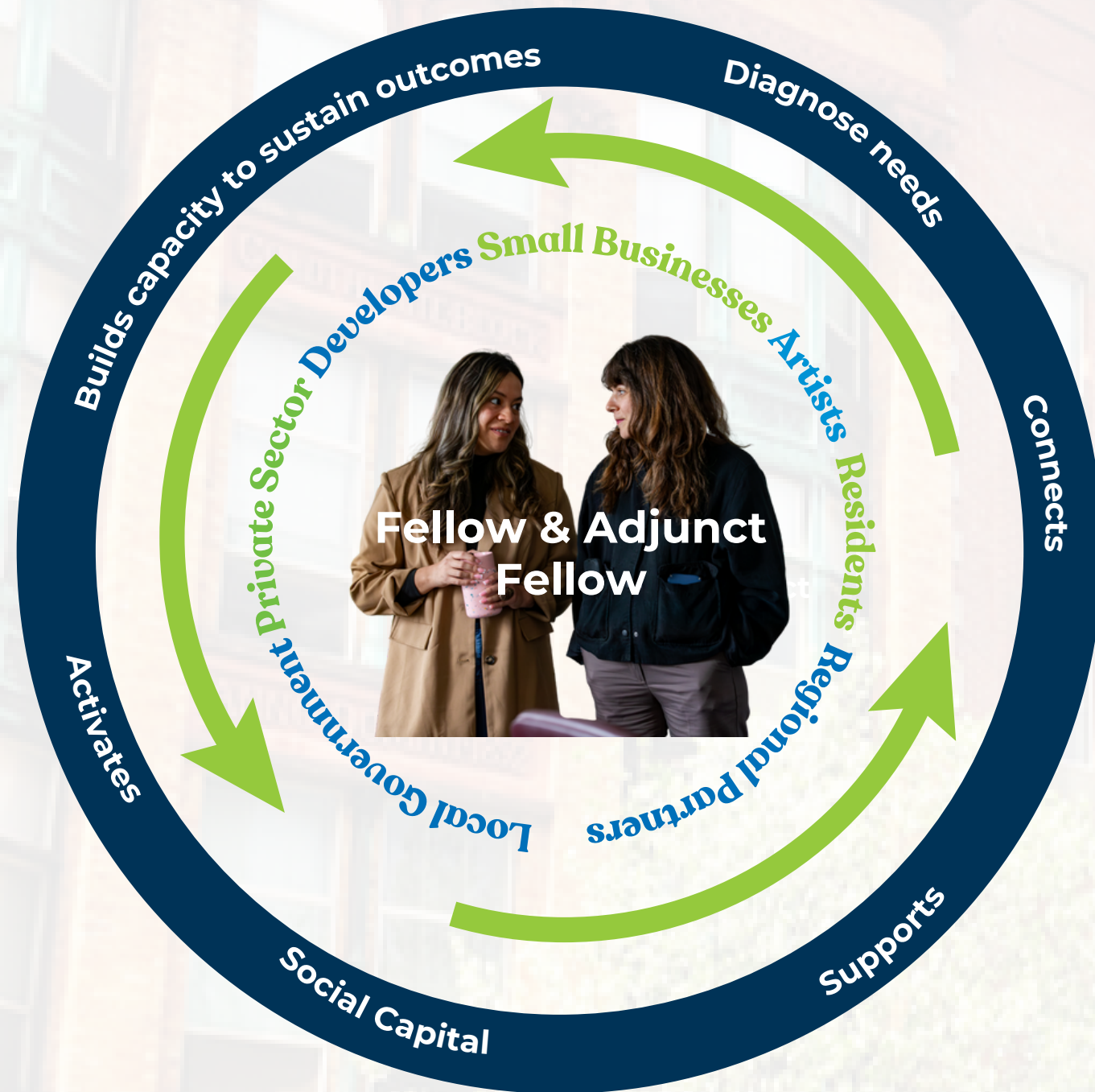


TDI focuses on neighborhoods in Gateway Cities with strong potential for **growth** and **vibrancy**.

Since 2013, 28 districts across 19 cities have participated in three cohorts.

The **fourth cohort** launches July 2026, adding **six new Gateway City districts**.

Application Key Guidelines



- Applications must come from a local collaborative partnership with **clearly defined roles**.
- Partnerships will work with MassDevelopment to advance district priorities.
- Each partnership must identify a **lead contact**.
- Each Gateway City can submit one main application, though multiple groups are encouraged to submit partner questionnaires.

ROCKTON

Co-Investment Expectations

- **Active Engagement:** Core partners must fully participate in the program, including decision-makers attending meetings and contributing staff, funding, space, or other in-kind support.
- **Municipal Commitment:** The municipality must participate in good faith, coordinate across departments, provide regular updates to leadership (e.g., Mayor or City Manager), and align city resources with TDI efforts.
- **Core Partnership** Composition must sign a Memorandum of Agreement outlining roles and responsibilities. At minimum, the partnership must include:
 - The municipality
 - An economic development or aligned organization
 - A private sector partner
- **Fiscal Agent Designation:** A fiscal agent (typically a nonprofit) must be appointed to manage TDI funds, including disbursements, recordkeeping, and reporting. Multiple agents may be used if appropriate.
- **Commitment to Shared Learning & Storytelling:** Partners must engage in TDI and Gateway City Network learning activities, share data, document lessons, and co-create narratives that reflect local impact and elevate community voices.

District Guidelines

What are we looking for in a proposed District?

- A neighborhood comprised of commercial real estate with a **mix of uses**, including retail/commercial, office, industrial, and housing.
- It's **walkable** for pedestrians and should predominantly contain independent **small businesses** as opposed to chain retail establishments.
- Identified **anchor institutions** that can support and move projects forward during and after the District is active.
- Existing commercial or institutional activity in or near the District to build additional efforts and or **co-investment** from local organizations.



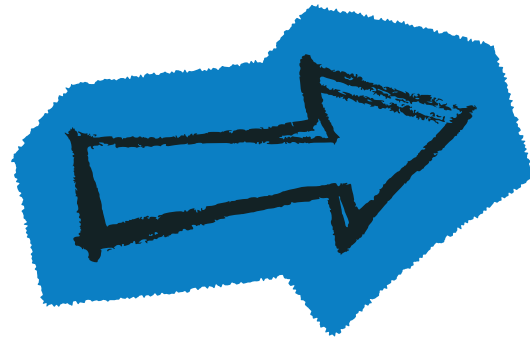
Measures of Success

The program considers success to be defined locally but here is a general framework for program success:

- **Economic vitality:** growth in small businesses, investment, and job opportunities.
- **Physical transformation:** visible improvements in public spaces and real estate activation.
- **Partnership strength:** active, representative collaboration and shared leadership.
- **Community trust & Inclusion:** meaningful engagement of residents and underrepresented voices.
- **Sustainability:** continued local commitment and co-investment beyond the program.



How To Apply



ONLINE

MassDevelopment.com [TDI Page]

Key Attachments

1. Partnership **Questionnaire** (at least 3)
2. **Partnership Information** Template (at least 3)
3. **Signed Letter** by City Manager or Mayor
4. **Video** capturing proposed district characteristics (2 minutes max - cannot be shot professionally)
5. Current **assessor's data** for the District
6. **Powerpoint** with photos, maps, diagrams, etc of district opportunities/challenges
7. No more than 3 recent planning or economic **analysis reports**
8. (optional) **social media pages** representing the district



2026-2029 New District Timeline

New District
Application Released
October 24, 2025

New District
Application Due
November 21, 2025

New Districts Notified
of award
February 2026

Fellow Matching
March 2026

6 New Districts to begin July 1, 2026 - July 1, 2029
+ 1 Designated Experimental Non-Gateway District

Q & A

Thank you!

