

# Things looking up in Fairfield's downtown

By [Margaret Manzo](#) | March 24, 2014 |

I often hear the comment, "They need to do something about downtown." Well just so you know, I'm they. Guess what? You're they, too.

There are many people quietly working behind the scenes to help improve downtown. The question is, are you? Do you shop downtown? Do you get your hair cut downtown? Do you have lunch downtown? Do you plan your events downtown? Do you attend the theater productions downtown?

Yes, you are they.

Until they (all of us) start patronizing the downtown businesses, there will never be the success we all know could and should happen. Once businesses are successful, other businesses will follow. It only takes a few really great success stories to create real change. We have had some fabulous new businesses open lately so trust us, downtown is worth another look.

Downtown stakeholders are beginning to see signs of improvement. We have several new projects in the works. The pavers in the crosswalks and intersections will all be replaced with stamped concrete. Our Design Committee is working on a decorative lighting project. Our Promotions Committee is producing a historic walking guide. Volunteers can be seen picking up litter, pruning trees, painting over graffiti and pulling weeds.

There are about 250 businesses within the 28-block downtown business district. Professional services, educational, retail, restaurants, personal services, along with nonprofit and government agencies are all located downtown. Many of these businesses are extremely successful and don't even need to advertise. At the same time, others rely heavily on foot traffic and need a steady stream of new customers to stay afloat.

Last year, 26 new businesses opened in downtown. Six businesses closed during the same time period. That's a net gain of 20 businesses, resulting in about 41 new jobs. They believe in downtown and are investing in the hopes that others will join them.

The next time you want to meet a friend for lunch, choose one of the 18 restaurants downtown. Or take the family out to enjoy the free special events.

New this year is the All Things Art festival, hosted by Artphit on April 26. The Farmers Market begins May 1 and will run every Thursday from 3 to 7 p.m. The Independence Day Parade returns on July 4th at 10 a.m. Our beloved Tomato Festival will take place Aug. 16 and 17. The Veterans Day Parade and Commemoration take place each year on Nov. 11.

Finally, this year's Christmas event will see some exciting new additions. We are working hard to bring an outdoor ice skating rink in for the season. The Christmas tree will be located at the

corner of Jefferson and Texas streets at the county lawn. Parkway Community Church has stepped up to help revamp our festivities and we know that the community is going to love the improvements.

So know that “they” are, in fact, doing something about downtown. They are us. Join us in our efforts and show your support. Volunteer opportunities abound and together we can create meaningful change. “We” can all do something about downtown.

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