

San Bernardino Investment Playbook

Project Details: Local Small Business Retail Plaza

In order to expand local entrepreneurs' access to affordable retail space, Uplift SB will work with a coalition of partners to acquire a transit-accessible multi-unit retail plaza within walking distance of downtown. After acquiring the property, the coalition will make needed building and grounds improvements and work with the Entrepreneurial Resource Center and other community actors to rent vacant units to local small business owners seeking affordable commercial leases. Uplift SB and coalition partners will be able to connect tenants to small business resources in the city and will guarantee that these commercial spaces remain permanently affordable, with a sliding rent scale to accommodate a broader range of entrepreneurs.

RATIONALE

Local small businesses have difficulty finding affordable commercial real estate in San Bernardino, particularly if they are Latino-, Black-, and/or woman-owned firms. The lack of accessible property undermines local entrepreneurship and job creation by forcing local entrepreneurs to set up shop outside San Bernardino. Those who manage to find space that they can afford in the City often end up in buildings that have fallen into disrepair with absentee landlords who are not interested in making needed property improvements.

OBJECTIVES

- Support local entrepreneurs working to grow their businesses
- Increase the inventory of affordable commercial space for local small businesses
- Use co-location to encourage peer learning and collaboration among local small business owners

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

La Placita on West 2nd Street is a good example of the type of retail plaza that this project will require. It is a 26-unit shopping plaza located across the street from the San Bernardino Depot. Anchored by a Superior Grocers (1108 W. 2nd St.) and a now-vacant Dollar Tree (1224 W. 2nd St.), the plaza is primarily composed of smaller retail spaces held by local-serving small businesses (a number of which are currently vacant).

NEXT STEPS

Uplift SB's Small Business Resource Group will identify specific project elements, seek out subject matter experts, develop cost estimates, determine the appropriate ownership model for the plaza, and devise a roadmap for securing funding, property acquisition, and phased implementation.