



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Urban Place Management Leader,

Downtowns and urban districts have been impacted like never before in the challenging year of 2020. When IDA began our benchmarking survey, our initial focus was on better understanding the diverse structures, funding mechanisms, and programmatic approaches being deployed by our urban place management organization (UPMO) members. Once the pandemic started, we added in COVID-19 impact questions to track how our communities and organizations were faring. This report summarizes our COVID-19 responses and findings from 244 respondents, or about two-thirds of our UPMO members. Each organization represents one response.

This report consists of two sections:

District Impacts: On the whole, respondents are optimistic about the long-term prospects of their districts. Half of respondents believe that they will bounce back faster than the city, and another 20% believe they will bounce back at the same rate as the city. Official vacancy rate changes have been relatively low, but organizations estimate that on average, about 15% of current storefront businesses will permanently close.

Organization Impacts: Most UPMOs have faced significant challenges and changes to their work, staffing, and funding structure. Those who are primarily reliant on an assessment or levy had more stable funding, but about one-quarter of respondents had lower than anticipated revenues in 2020 and a lower budget in 2021. Three-fourths of respondents did not have staffing changes. One silver lining of this pandemic is that just about all organizations said that they have earned more stakeholder trust, as more people became aware of the valuable services the UPMO provided, from being a trusted source of information to their role in clean and safe environments to their role in providing and advocating for relief for all businesses.

This report is just the first of future data releases from our benchmarking survey, which will provide further information on the state of our industry. Thank you to all who participated in this comprehensive survey. We hope that you will gain new insights using this report.

Sincerely,

David Downey, CAE, Assoc. AIA, IOM

President & CEO