

## Executive Summary

Throughout the globe, downtown districts, city centers and main streets are hubs of activity for the community that live, work and play in them, and in the areas adjacent to them. They are gathering places for people, points of pride that tourists often seek, economic drivers for a municipality and thus an asset that is critical to protect. How do we best protect these valued spaces? What is the role of a place management organization when it comes to safety and security?

Urban place management organizations are a form of place-based civic governance, often self-taxing, structured via public-private partnerships to connect the many stakeholders of a place. These organizations are on the front lines of our sidewalks, streets, parks and public spaces, tackling societal issues on a hyper-local basis. Urban place management organizations are first responders downtown, responding to, and addressing, issues of safety.

*When safety and emergency plans are developed for downtown districts, urban district managers deserve a seat at the table.*

Downtown districts are ideal organizations to partake in strategic planning efforts on public safety. The Houston Downtown Management District sums it up like this: “as an organization with strong ties to the business and residential community and city leadership, [the] downtown [management district] has the continuity needed to address safety and cleanliness... understanding what the stakeholders truly need and how the different components work together to help a city achieve improvements year after year.”

By the year 2000, law enforcement agencies in Houston agreed, and the number of cooperative partnerships between agencies began to rise, allowing a “pooling of strengths to prevent and solve crimes.”

District management organizations have a number of valuable resources that can be essential in planning for public safety or responding to emergencies such as:

- A critical perspective of the place or district itself
- Strong relationships with businesses, property owners and private security teams
- A communication system (website, emails, social media, two-way radios) to reach stakeholders throughout the district
- Staff to aid in development and execution of emergency plans
- A clean and safe team that can assist in monitoring for crime and aiding in emergency situations

As advocates for safe spaces and conduits to the community, district management organizations are a reliable resource to help keep people safe at the local level.

The 2017 IDA Top Issues Council on Safety and Security has developed this guide as a tool for strategic safety planning for urban place management organizations. The council studied the latest crime trends districts face, examined how a district management organization’s role in emergency response and crime prevention has grown, and explored how technology is revolutionizing communication between law enforcement agencies and the business community. Several case studies and best practices are shared throughout this publication, with the intent that districts can learn from one another and replicate programs that are a fit for the local place management organization.