

In Case You Missed It!



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Our Vision

The Joseph C. Cornwall Center strives to be:

-A key resource in the production of "usable" knowledge for the public, private, and nonprofit sector development in Newark, the northern region of New Jersey and beyond.

-A central force convening key civil society individuals and institutions as they engage in and pursue the economic, political, and cultural revitalization of Newark.

-A forceful agent for the economic and administrative coordination and cooperation of Newark and its surrounding communities.

-A national model for what a university-based center can accomplish working with regional, local, and community partners.

From the Director's Desk

Wednesday, July 17, 2013

Greetings,

Please see the attached article.

All the best

A handwritten signature in dark red ink, consisting of the letters "RVA" in a stylized, cursive font.

Prudential office tower pinches profits for store owners in Newark

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By [Barry Carter/Star-Ledger](#)

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on July 12, 2013 at 4:06 PM



Halsey Street store owners said the Prudential office tower under construction is hurting their business. Parking has been eliminated and that keeps customers away. *Patti Sapone/The Star-Ledger*

Halsey Street in Newark was the perfect spot for Linda Jumah when she opened her ladies clothing store two years ago.

Shoppers browsed in Luxe Boutique during their lunch break, then came back after work for a pair of shoes or a dress.

Business was good and Jumah could see the neighborhood had the potential of trendy urban areas like Park Slope in Brooklyn, or maybe South Street in Philadelphia.

Jumah figured she was sitting pretty until Prudential put up construction fences in December for its 20-story office tower across the street. Next, parking on the street disappeared between Cedar and New streets. Then it was the customers who vanished when construction began two months ago.



Linda Jumah in her shop, Luxe Boutique, in Newark. Jumah, a small business owner on Halsey Street feels that businesses has dropped off dramatically since Prudential began construction on a new office tower across the street. *Patti Sapone/The Star-Ledger*

"On a normal day, people would have been walking through the store," Jumah said last week. "I thought I made the right move."

Jumah and other small-business owners say the project is just what the area needs. They just don't know if they'll be around when it's completed.

"I'm praying," she said.

Praying for it to be finished.

Bob DeFillippo, a Prudential spokesman, said the company empathizes with owners. Many concerns from other business owners were aired six months ago during a meeting at Rutgers-Newark. As best they could, DeFillippo said, executives explained what the project means to the area.

The \$444 million tower will anchor commercial development along two city blocks between Halsey and Broad near Military Park. It will create 400 jobs, 2,000 construction jobs and parking for 1,500 cars.

Prudential also plans to eventually build a second tower on adjacent land.

"We know it's a massive project," DeFillippo said. "We're doing our best to get it done. We're hoping the end of 2014, but there's no way to be absolutely certain."

Meanwhile, small businesses are feeling the pinch — just as they slowly crawl out of a recession.

"We're at the tail end of the most dire financial meltdown of the last 60 years and small businesses across the nation have suffered mightily," said Roland V. Anglin, director of the Joseph C. Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies, a division of Rutgers' School of Public Affairs and Administration. "We all have to dig deep and figure out how to help."

Anglin suggested the city might help the merchants with access to capital or a bridge loan, something to tide them over. The business owners haven't reached out.

Alex Andrade said he needs something else: customers.

He stands in the doorway of his shop, Underground Tattoo, waiting for walk-ins.

They never come.

Since construction started, he has laid off two employees. Now it's just him and an apprentice.

Each month he looks at his bills, picking one that won't be paid. Sometimes it's two if he needs the money for taxes.

"You can't make no money if nobody walks in," Andrade said.

On a recent afternoon last week, around lunch time, you could count the people on the street on one hand.

Owners said customers who have taken the chance of darting into their stores have gotten parking tickets. People passing by don't even browse anymore, because the street is not inviting with construction walls and earthmovers growling. They just keep walking, while would-be customers in cars circle the block before driving off.

"They say bye, mami," said Martha Luna, owner of Dominican Unisex, a hair salon.

She had 10 employees, now she's down to three and shuffling bills like Andrade.

"I have no money to pay," said Luna, who has owned the business 11 years.

Fatou Ndiaye, owner of a hair braiding shop for 17 years, said she has lost 60 percent of her clients.

"People used to come visit," she said. "Now there is nothing. What am I going to do?"

Jumah is not sure, either.

Newark needs small businesses, she said. They hire locally. They patronize each other and keep customers in the city.

And on Halsey Street, they create a neighborhood vibe and culture that makes Jumah feel right at home.