



**2019**  
*Annual Report*  
**1st Edition**



*The*  
**DOWNTOWN**  
**18 DISTRICT 16**

**BELLEVILLE**

[downtownbelleville.ca](http://downtownbelleville.ca)

## Board of Directors

### Executive Officers

Chair: Kathryn Brown | Kate's Kitchen

Vice-Chair: Lorne McDougall | McDougall Insurance

Treasurer: Abraham Ramos Serratos | Chilangos Mexican Restaurant

Secretary: Open

### Directors

Dwane Barratt | Barratt's Office Pro

Ken Harnden | Pinnacle Music

Chad Guziewicz | Tire Wizard

Melanie Pujic | Capers Restaurant

Sandy Musson | Tri & Run Sports

Shawn Patriquin | They Integrated

Tara VanDijk | Belleville Club

Ryan Williams | Ward 1 Councillor City of Belleville

### Staff

Marijo Cuerrier | Executive Director

Kelsey Moniz | Marketing & Media Officer

### *Our Vision:*

By 2023, Downtown Belleville will be the thriving centre of our community.



## *Our Purpose*

The Belleville Downtown District BIA exists to position downtown Belleville as a vibrant community.

## *Values*

1. Collaborative partnership
- 2 Forward Thinking
3. Being Accountable
4. Active 2-Way Communication
5. Passion to Succeed

## *Strategic Plan Objectives*

- 1** Change the public perception of downtown Belleville from lacklustre to vibrant.
- 2** Encourage new business investment to increase Downtown District commercial occupancy rate and create more Downtown activity.
- 3** Ignite current downtown investors (property and business owners) to become champions for a vital downtown.
- 4** Improve the Downtown customer experience and make Downtown Belleville the place where people want to meet.

To read the full Strategic Plan visit [downtownbelleville.ca/strategicplan](http://downtownbelleville.ca/strategicplan)

**“I am so proud of the work that has been accomplished this year [by the Downtown District] and look forward to more positive work in the future.”**

Mitch Panciuk, City Council Meeting  
November 12, 2019

## *Message from the Chair*

**2019** has been a year of many “firsts” for the **Downtown District**. Layer by layer we’re introducing elements of change and we’re beginning to see the benefits. There is a misconception that Downtown Belleville just went through a revitalization, when in truth, we are only just beginning.

Entering into 2019, it was obvious that the most urgent challenge was to **change the public perception of the downtown core**. Although there were a lot of great things happening we were struggling to get the word out to the community that something had changed. It was apparent we had to invest some time and resources in deciding who we were and then let others know about it.

It began with the approval of new bylaws for our organization (a mundane but important part of our existence) and our first major investment was the introduction of our **new Executive Director and Marketing & Media Officer** roles, which provided our community with a hearty injection of professional marketing capabilities. These skills allow us to re-focus our message to consumers, partners and the City Council & staff.

With the organization on new footing, we turned our attention to **our Strategic Plan** including deliverables and measurements. How will we know if we’re realizing on the investments we’re making? Because we have a baseline and measures to tell us when we’re on track, need to modify expectations and when we realize the goal.

We created a cultural shift with the events we’re offering in the District. Savour the Chill saw double the number of people in attendance. Downtown@Dusk **far surpassed everyone’s expectations** (and was an amazing night of fun, music, food and more)! Spicy Food filled Market Square on a beautiful Sunday afternoon and the Trick or Treat event saw many ghosts & goblins throughout the core. The Santa Parade Market saw over 600 attendees, and we have Girls Night Out and Enchanted Holiday Night Market coming up.

And, to demonstrate we’re “pivot-ready”, we launched a **new brand and website**. Why rebrand you ask? Because we’ll need to continue changing the public’s perception and we’ll do that by encouraging everyone (merchants, restaurateurs, building owners, service providers, potential investors, partners and visitors alike) to **“Be a Part of It!”**

This is only the beginning and I’m extremely proud to be a part of a team of staff and volunteers that are passionate and committed to leading The Downtown District on this journey.

Thank **YOU** for trusting us!!

- **Kathryn Brown, Kate’s Kitchen**

# Highlights

**85%**  
Occupancy rate of street  
level businesses



**182**  
Street level  
businesses

**214**  
Total  
Buildings

**Pedestrian Count**

**6,423**

1 week in Sept 2019  
at Bridge St & Front St



**Visitors & Residents**  
rated downtown Belleville

**8**

on a scale of 0-10  
(Based on 1208 respondents)

**14**  
# of Downtown  
events in 2019



**160**  
Estimated # of graffiti  
removal instances in 2019  
at a cost of \$93.75 per  
instance, paid by Tax Levy

**Top 4 Areas of Improvement**

- 1** Parking
- 2** Perception
- 3** Foot Traffic
- 4** Safety/Security



**Accessibility Rate**

**74%**

(Based on wheelchair access)



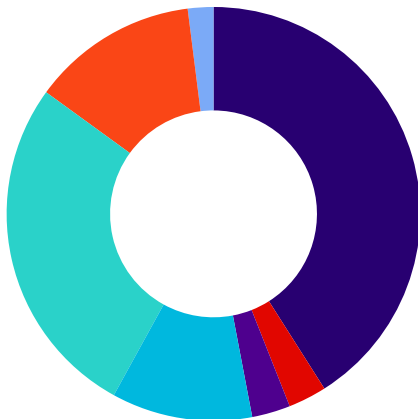
# *Snap Shot* OF THE DISTRICT

This section uses data and facts to illustrate the landscape and opportunities for downtown Belleville.



# Business Categories

- Services: 41%
- Arts: 3%
- Entertainment: 3%
- Food & Beverage: 11%
- Retail: 27%
- Wellness: 13%
- Residential: 2%



**57%**  
Of our businesses are experienced based

## BUSINESS OWNERSHIP



### BUSINESS GROUPS

The Downtown District membership is made up of two distinct groups. Services (doctors, lawyers, insurance, social services, B2B, wealth management, accountants, real estate) and experiential offerings (retail, food & beverage, arts, wellness and entertainment). Experiential offerings are approximately 57% of our membership and are the face of our downtown as well as the tourism arm of the District. Services are 43% of our membership and their employees are regular customers of experiential offerings.

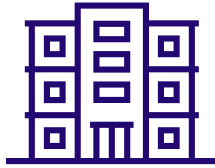
In 2020 we will be looking for ways to build relationships with both groups so that we can grow and support each other as a community.

**3**  
Businesses outside the downtown boundaries have inquired this fall how they can *Be a Part of It!*

### DIVERSE MIX OF BUSINESSES

- 15 Patios
- 5 Salons
- 7 Cafes
- 4 Banks
- 3 Bike Shops
- 1 Pet Store
- 4 Spas
- 2 Flower Shops
- 1 Modelling Agency
- 2 Barber Shops
- 6 Art Galleries
- 1 Office supply shop
- & more!*

# Occupancy Rates



## ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

This year's occupancy numbers have improved from last year. There are a few reasons for this: we have some new members, the data is more accurate, our office towers are filling up and we only counted main floor commercial this year.

What is interesting about our vacancy numbers is that we truly only have 8 commercial spaces available. Why? Because the remaining spaces are either under renovation or have been chronically vacant for various reasons. 2020 will focus on reducing vacancy in the District.

**214** Total Properties  
**182** Occupied (Street Level)  
**32** Vacant

**85%**  
Occupancy rate of street level businesses

*Only 8*  
Street level properties are tenant-ready

## OF THE 32 VACANT PROPERTIES:

- 16** are chronically vacant
- 8** are under renovation
- 8** are tenant-ready



## PROSPECTS

In the last 4 months there have been inquiries from 8 different businesses interested in finding a space downtown. **Out of the 8 interested businesses, 5 were restaurants.**

The tenant-ready properties are not currently restaurant-ready. This is an opportunity to renovate properties for the type of businesses interested in moving into the District.



## Pedestrian Counts

### TRAFFIC GROWTH

We have been fortunate to have a gentleman who is keenly interested in the revitalization of Ontario downtowns, who has provided us with pedestrian counts as far back as 2015. We have shared some interesting stats below and as you can see we are headed in the right direction in terms of feet on the street, but we have a long way to go.

**6,423**  
Weekly foot  
traffic count in  
September 2019

Looking at Trenton's numbers, there are some key reasons why their % of population is higher than downtown Belleville: They have 2 anchor chains in their downtown core: Metro and Shoppers Drug Mart and they don't have a mall to compete with. We can't change the mall, but we can create an experience in the Downtown District that is unique to us.

We need to be asking ourselves '*what key things do we have to offer?*'. Riverfront Trail, patios, independently-owned shops, the great outdoors, walking distance to the marina. We need to find ways to leverage these key points of difference and create a community that everyone wants to 'be a part of'.

### Weekly foot traffic comparison from 2018:

Town/City	Weekly Foot Traffic	Population	% of Population
Trenton	6,216	20,375	30.5%
Peterborough	12,202	81,032	15%
Guelph	13,681	131,794	10.4%
Belleville	4,308	50,716	8.5%
Welland	3,855	52,293	7.4%
Brantford	5,837	97,496	6%

### Sample of Weekly foot traffic in Downtown Belleville in September 2019:

Pedestrian counter location: outside of Miss Priss and Gourmet Diem

Day of the Week	#of People	Best Hour	Second Best Hour
Monday	828	2-3 pm	11am-12 pm
Tuesday	1,037	2-3 pm	1-2 pm
Wednesday	946	1-2 pm	12-1 pm
Thursday	1,069	1-2 pm	4-5 pm
Friday	1,272	3-4 pm	11 am-12 pm
Saturday	895	12-1 pm	1-2 pm
Sunday	376	12-1 pm	11-12 pm

## 2019 Events

- February: **Savour the Chill**
- May: **3 Days in May**
- June: **Downtown@Dusk**
- July: **Strategic Plan Launch Party\***
- August: **Spicy Food Contest**
- August: **Sidewalk Market**
- September: **Porchfest Afterparty**
- October: **Halloween Trick or Treating**
- October: **Brand Launch\***
- November: **Santa Claus Parade Market**
- November: **Annual General Meeting\***

### Still to come...

- November: **Girls' Night Out**
- December: **Enchanted**
- December: **QAC Fundraiser**

**4,568**  
Registered attendees for  
DT@Dusk



**14**  
Events were  
executed by the  
BDIA in 2019

### Event Highlights

- **4,568** registered attendees for DT@Dusk
- Brand Launch had a **20% member attendance** rate
- Porchfest Afterparty saw a **79% increase in foot traffic** from the Saturday prior
- **31 members participated** in the Halloween Trick or Treat event (up from 25 last year)
- Girls' Night Out has over **28 participating businesses**
- **Over 600 attendees** at the Parade Market

The events listed here are a combination of BDIA led and third-party led events.

\*Member only events

# Digital Stats

## GROWTH

We continue to grow our digital presence through organic and paid social media. This year we launched a campaign called “Not Bought Online” to promote shopping at our retail locations. We will continue the momentum in digital marketing in 2020.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

**103%**  
Increase in  
Instagram Followers  
(From 1,310 to 2,665)

**39%**  
Increase in  
Facebook Followers  
(From 3,287 to 4,567)



@downtownbelleville



@BellevilleDowntownDistrict

## DIGITAL MAIN STREET

- Approx. 124 members active on **Google My Business**
- Approx. 29 members active on **TripAdvisor**
- **9** Businesses applied for the **\$2,500 digital grant**
- **\$32,500** in marketing dollars infused into downtown by grants from the Government of Ontario

**\$32,500**  
In marketing grants from the government



# Facade Improvement Program

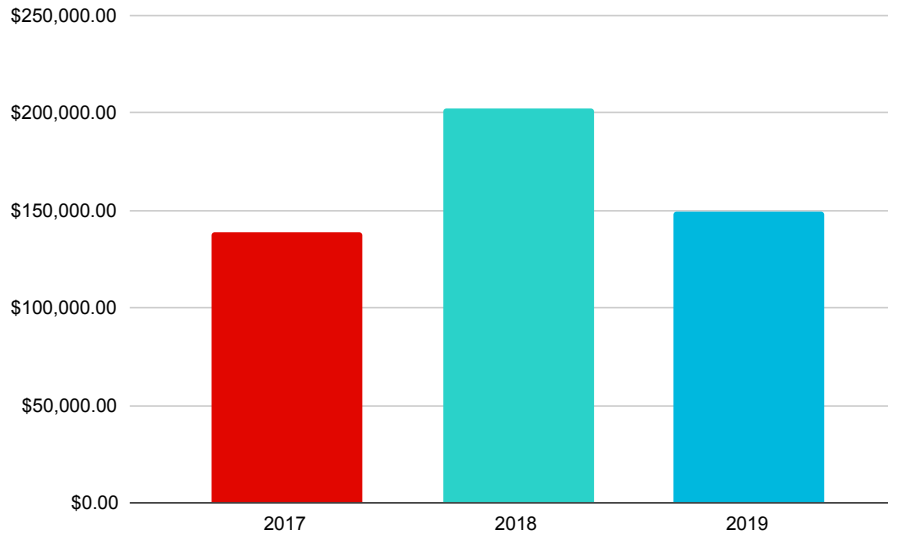
## FUNDING TRADITION

We are fortunate to have many property owners that have the vision and tenacity to bring some of these old buildings back to life.

The Facade Improvement Program is one way our property owners can access Municipal funds to breathe life into the Downtown District.

**\$149,000+**  
Granted from the city for façade improvements in 2019

**\$491,000+**  
Granted from the City of Belleville for façade improvements over the past 3 years



### FACADE IMPROVEMENT:



BEFORE



AFTER

**“This is an up & coming location. We need MORE!”**

- Member

# Tax Levy

## INVESTING IN DOWNTOWN

Below are approximate figures for the Downtown District BIA Tax Levy that property owners within our boundaries are responsible to pay annually to the City of Belleville. This levy is what supports what we do in the office to position downtown Belleville as a vibrant community.

This past year, the team in the office was focused on beginning to lay the foundation to change the perception of the downtown from lacklustre to vibrant, our first objective from our Strategic Plan. This doesn't happen overnight and it happens from the inside out. Our members first and foremost have to believe that Downtown District is the place to be.

**160**  
 Estimated # of graffiti removal instances in 2019 at a cost of \$93.75 per instance, paid by the tax levy

Assessment Value	2019 BDIA Tax Rate	2019 Annual BDIA Levy (Sample)	2019 BDIA Monthly Expense (Sample)
\$450,000	0.61573%	\$2,770	\$230
\$359,000	0.61573%	\$2,210	\$184
\$313,000	0.61573%	\$1,927	\$160
\$213,000	0.61573%	\$1,311	\$109
\$170,000	0.61573%	\$1,046	\$87

FACADE IMPROVEMENT:



BEFORE



AFTER

**“Downtown is growing and evolving, it is becoming the place to be!”**

- Member

# Survey Results

## KEY FINDINGS

The data presented in this section is collected from surveys that were conducted in September and October of 2019.



# Visitor & Resident Survey Results

## RESEARCH METHOD

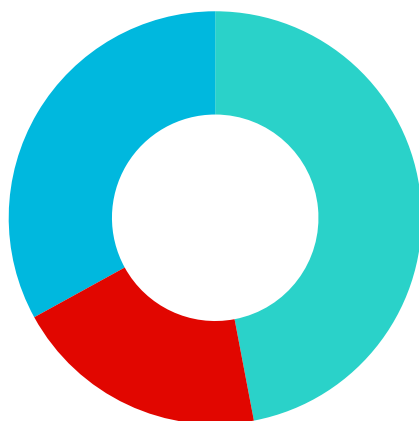
In the month of October a Visitor and Resident survey was distributed by email and through printed postcards placed in retail and restaurant businesses throughout downtown. The results presented here are based on the **1208 respondents**.

Visitors & Residents  
rated downtown

8

on a scale of 0-10

- Promoters: 47%
- Detractors: 20%
- Passive: 33%



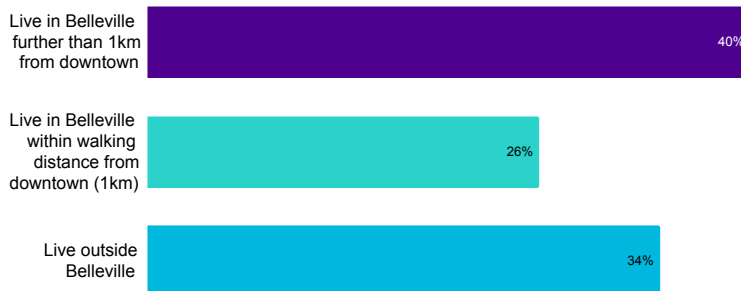
## RECOMMENDING DOWNTOWN

We asked the respondents how likely they are to recommend Downtown Belleville as a place to visit on a scale of 0 to 10. 47% of respondents answered 9 or 10. 20% of the respondents answered 0 to 6.

**The number of Promoters outweighs the Detractors.**

## Top 5 places visitors came from:

- Trenton
- Prince Edward County
- Stirling
- Frankford
- Kingston



## SUMMARY

We were able to capture valuable information in regards to visitors to the Downtown District. One of our biggest challenges is to overcome our local community's perception of the downtown experience.

The results from this survey are encouraging because they are results from visitors and customers that have actually experienced the Downtown District and guess what? They like us! We, as a community need to work hard to bring people downtown to actually experience what we offer.

# Member Survey Results

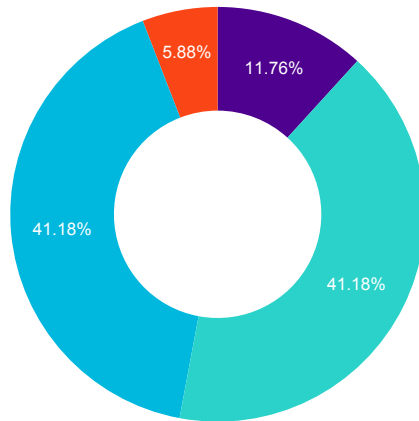
## RESEARCH METHOD

In the month of September we asked members to fill out a series of questions to collect quantitative data from the Business and Property Owners in downtown Belleville. There were a total of **34 business owners and 16 property owners** that participated in the survey. We hope to increase the participation next year to ensure the integrity of our data. Thank you to those who participated. Look out for next year's member survey in September 2020.

## Business Owner Results

How would you describe the overall business climate of downtown in the past year?

- Significantly Improved
- Improved
- Remains Stable
- Declined



**53%**  
Of business owners describe the climate of downtown as improved or significantly improved

### Top 4 Areas of Improvement

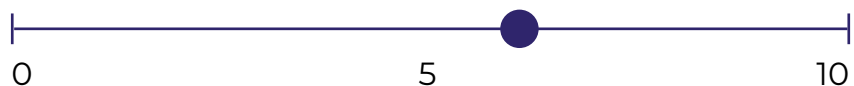
(In order of priority ranked by business owners)

- 1 Parking
- 2 Perception
- 3 Foot Traffic
- 4 Safety/Security



How likely are you to recommend downtown Belleville as a place to open a business?

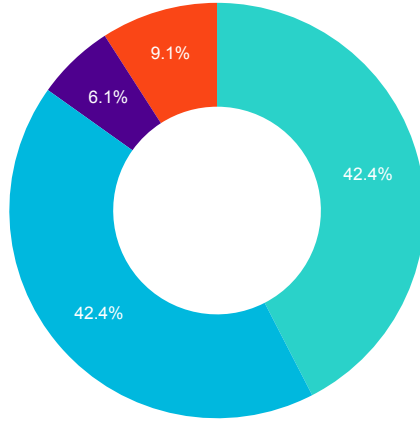
Business Owners rated downtown **6 out of 10**





**By 2023, do you have plans to:**

- Expand operations for your business
- Remain the same
- Sell your business
- Relocate your business out of downtown



**42%**  
Of business owners are planning to expand operations of their business

**Over 50%**  
Of business owners indicated they spend less than 5% on marketing

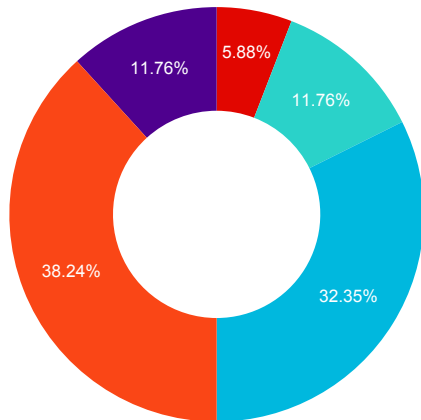
**IT'S TIME TO INVEST IN MARKETING!**

A major opportunity for business is to invest in marketing of their business. Marketing standards recommend spending 5% of projected revenues on marketing to stay status quo and spending 10% to grow.

*Of those who invest in marketing, Social Media is the #1 tactic used.*

**Indicate your overall satisfaction with downtown Belleville as a place for business in the last 12 months:**

- Extremely Disappointed
- Disappointed
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied



**50%**  
Of business owners are satisfied or very satisfied with downtown Belleville as a place for business

**OPPORTUNITY AREAS:**

**“Lack of customers and business.”**

- Member

**“Most businesses aren’t open very late so it doesn’t encourage people to come here.”**

- Member

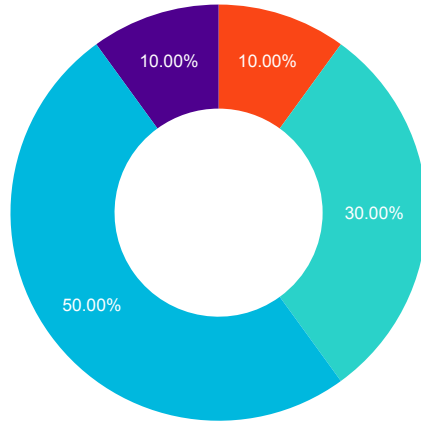
**“I think there are currently some issues we need to address with city hall for the difficulty of building permits, overnight parking etc.”**

- Member

# Property Owner Results

Indicate your overall satisfaction with downtown Belleville as a place for business in the last 12 months:

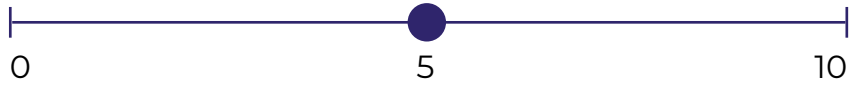
- Extremely Disappointed
- Disappointed
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Very Satisfied



**50%**  
Of property owners are somewhat satisfied with downtown Belleville as a place for business

How likely are you to recommend downtown Belleville as a place to invest in property?

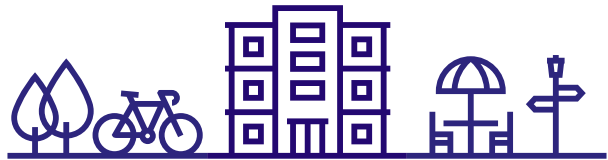
Property Owners rated downtown **5 out of 10**



## Top 4 Areas of Improvement

(In order of priority ranked by property owners)

- 1 Parking
- 2 Safety/Security
- 3 Perception
- 4 Vacancy



## OPPORTUNITY AREAS:

**“The residential component is critical to sustaining a vibrant downtown and a few new projects will support this even more.”**  
- Member

**“Ensure city hall continues to invest in downtown via beautification, business support, public areas and special event support.”**  
- Member

**“Extraordinarily difficult to obtain Building permit.”**  
- Member

**“Encourage downtown living with new developments and re-development of existing buildings through promoting the opportunities.”**  
- Member

## *A year in review*

### **LOOKING BACK**

Over this past year that have been many accomplishments for the downtown:

- Updated Bylaws and Constitution
- DMS Grant \$10,000 allowed us to hire 2 contract workers to work 1 on 1 with our members on improving their digital footprint
- Partnership with Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board on their map, giving us a distribution of over 40,000 throughout Ontario
- Rebrand and new user-friendly website
- Relocation of office
- Hiring of Executive Director and Marketing Officer
- Completion and implementation of a Strategic Plan
- New Banners throughout downtown and across the Moira River Bridge
- Placement of map at Meyers Pier to draw boaters up to the downtown district
- Co-applicant with the City of Belleville for RED Funding
- Digital Billboard at Bell and North Front
- Improved relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, City of Belleville, Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board
- Over 30 positive local press articles and coverage
- Tourism-Oriented Directional Signage on 401
- Implementation of the Safety & Security Initiative



## *Looking ahead to 2020*

Together we have another 365 days to make a difference in the Downtown District. We now have many baseline measurables in place so that we can measure our progress, which is the first step to succeeding.

Using our strategic plan to guide us, Kelsey and I will work hard to make the Downtown District the place where people want to invest their time and money. But we can't do it alone. We need each and every one of our members, staff and residents to choose to 'Be a Part of It!' We look forward to the opportunity to work together.

- Marijo Cuerrier

# Be a Part of it



[downtownbelleville.ca](http://downtownbelleville.ca)