



# 2022 *Annual Report*

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





# Board of Directors

## Executive Officers

Chair: Stacey Kerr | Scalliwag Toys  
Vice Chair: Kaya Pereira | Bazaar Artisan Market  
Treasurer: Maury Flunder| Property Owner  
Secretary: Sarah Hutchison | We Thrive

## Directors

Tanya Baldwin | Haus + Hom  
Jeff Camacho | Burger Revolution  
David Gilbert | Property Owner  
Chad Guziewicz | Tire Wizard, Rentify, Moveogo  
Emma Travis | Be Prepared  
Tyler Allsopp | City of Belleville Council Appointee

## Staff

Luisa Sorrentino | Executive Director  
Danielle Hanoman | Media & Marketing Officer  
Sara Behring | Welcoming Streets Steward

*Our Vision:*  
By 2025, Downtown Belleville will be the thriving centre of our community.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!**  
Kathryn Brown | Kate's Kitchen  
Rebecca Burlington | Flowers by Dustin  
Shawn Patriquin | They Inc.

**OUTSTANDING IN THE DISTRICT**  
A big thank you to **The City of Belleville, Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board** and **Belleville Chamber of Commerce** for their dedication to helping Downtown Belleville thrive!

\*Cover photos by Justen Soule & Andrew Clarke



## 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 Two-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](https://downtownbelleville.ca/strategicplan).



## *Message from the Chair*

Volunteering with the BIA can be a rewarding experience - seeing events and other projects come to fruition after months of hard work is pretty darn satisfying. But it certainly isn't an easy task, as many of our members have learned after giving their time and energy to the Downtown over the course of the last 50 years of our BIA's existence. With 200+ independent-minded entrepreneurs, it can be incredibly challenging to get everyone on the same page. We've seen a lot of that these past few years, especially with all the hurdles of coping with a global pandemic, wind storms, and so many other forces that are out of our collective control.

Meeting other BIA staff and volunteers at the OBIAA conference this past April reinforced that we are not alone in these challenges. Personally, I find that comforting, because seeing folks from BIAs around Ontario with the same issues means that our problems are not unique. As a result it also means that solutions are not unique, and that we can commiserate and share knowledge with one another to overcome them. We're already a part of these collective solutions ourselves, with our BIA being recognized with an award from OBIAA for our Welcoming Streets Program. This fantastic program is now being emulated and implemented in several more areas across the province, and we are in turn able to provide leadership and guidance to other BIAs.

To me, this shows that when we do come together as a team, we can make so many good things happen. This was certainly the case during the hardships these past few years of pandemic life, and will almost certainly remain an undeniable truth moving forward - we get out of the BIA what we put into it. This means more than just dollars and cents - it means passion, perseverance, and innovative ideas. It means sweat, tears, long hours, and pavement pounding. It means dedication to a community mindset and a collective good that is bigger than all of us, but from which we all still benefit because we are members of that community. It also means patience, empathy, and respect for each other, our BIA staff, and our broader community as a whole, even when we don't always agree.

The Belleville Downtown District is a vibrant community with lots of room to grow and change as new faces and new ideas join us. I look forward to being a part of that, and I hope that all of you do too.

**- Stacey Kerr, Scalliwag Toys**





# Highlights

78%

Occupancy rate of street level businesses



201

Total number of active members

5,429

Highest weekly pedestrian count in 2022



Visitors & Residents rated Downtown Belleville

7

on a scale of 0-10  
(Based on 165 respondents)

\$237,000+

Received in grants and in-kind services in 2022



\$50,000+

granted from the city for facade improvements in 2022

Top 4 Areas of Improvement:  
Based on member survey

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



280+

direct calls responded to from membership seeking assistance from Welcoming Streets Steward



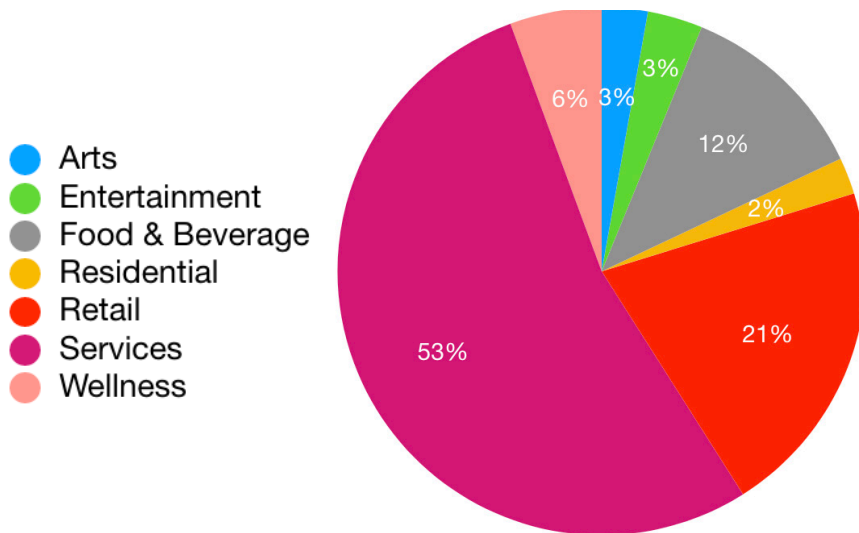
# *Snap Shot* OF THE DISTRICT

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





## Business Categories



**47%**  
of our businesses are  
experience based

### 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 47% of our membership and are the face of our Downtown as well as the tourism arm of the District. Services are 53% of our membership and their employees are regular customers of experiential offerings.

The forward-facing message on our social channels highlight the experiential aspect of the Downtown District. This includes 'investing in the lifestyle' by choosing to live, work and play here.

### DIVERSE MIX OF BUSINESSES

**15** Patios  
**20** Salons/Spas/Wellness  
**7** Cafes  
**4** Banks  
**3** Bike Shops  
**1** Pet Store  
**29** Retail  
**2** Flower Shops  
**12** Art & Leisure  
*& more!*



## Occupancy Rates

**201** Active Businesses

**176** Street Level Units

**138** Occupied (Street Level)

**39** Vacant



### OF THE 39 VACANT PROPERTIES:

**18** are chronically vacant

**13** are under renovation

**8** are tenant-ready



As we work together with the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA) to build a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that is customized to suit Ontario's Downtown BIAs, in 2023 we envision being able to access numbers that are based on each building's address. In the meantime, these numbers are gathered by staff through a walking audit, with observations and insights resulting from our relationships with building owners.

In 2022, much like 2021, we witnessed an interest in property and investment, including but not limited to purchases from investors from outside our region.



# Welcome

## NEW MEMBERS

This year we welcomed nine new businesses Downtown and 8 new property owners.

Doki Doki  
Tinkered Decor and More  
MO|CO General Boutique  
Equilibria Wellness  
Tropical Blends Cafe  
Hunt on Front  
Tiger Chicken and Ribs  
Pinnacle Music School  
Building Life

## New Property Ownership

183 Front St.	261 Front St.
210 Front St.	307 Front St.
232 Front St.	322 Front St.
241 Front St.	390 Front St.

# Farewell

## RETIREMENTS AND CLOSURES

We said farewell to two business this year, we wish them all well in their next endeavour. There has been one retirement.

Thai Bangkok  
Chilangos  
Peter Zamanis (Previous Owner of Mr. Zed's)

## IN MEMORIAM

A special acknowledgement of members of our community that we lost this year:

Richard Courneyea

Richard was a passionate Downtown District property and business owner, champion and a past BIA chair.



## *New Projects*

### **Patio Project 2022/2023**

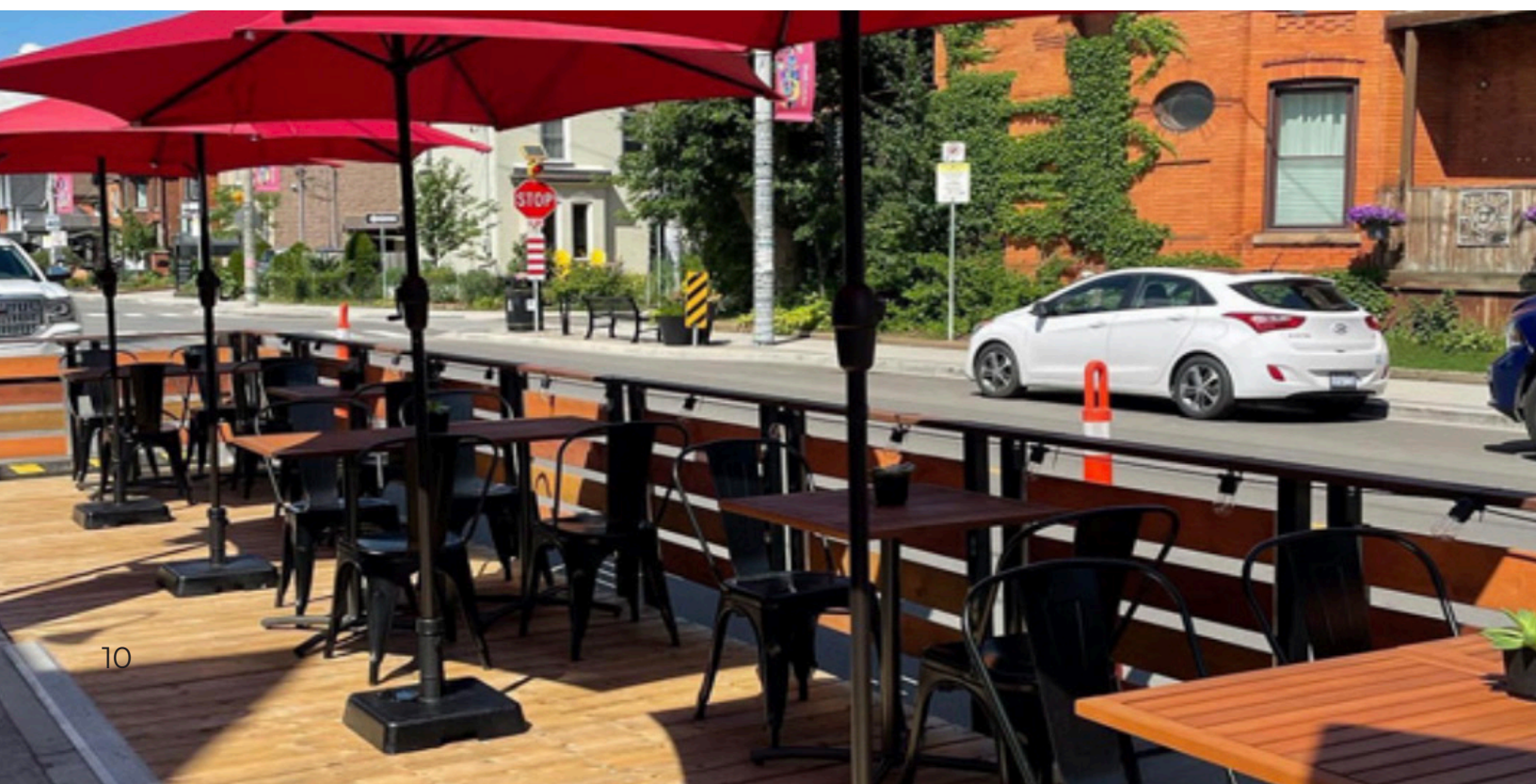
The City Of Belleville in partnership with the BIA will enhance outdoor experiences that support a lively urban environment, solidifying the Downtown District as a culinary and entertainment destination of choice for residents and visitors.

With the standardization of 20-25 streets patios/parklets that create new community spaces for small businesses within the Downtown District Boundaries, the project addresses significant matters in the District, including but not limited to compliance, accessibility, standardization, public safety, inclusion and streetscaping uniformity and long-term beautification. Patios will be purchased by the City of Belleville through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund - the new streamlined program will ensure timely, quality installation and removal while accessibility standards are met.

### **Gift Card Program**

In partnership with the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board and partner communities, we are launching a regional gift card program. The cards will act as excellent gifts and encourage consumers to shop and dine at a local level. The gift card platform will be hosted by AnyCard, who currently provides similar platforms for over 1,000 regions across Canada.

Consumers have been found to spend between 20-60% more than the value on their gift cards.





## Events

We had so many exciting initiatives in the Downtown this year including:

- Savour the Chill
- Spring into Treasure
- Downtown @ Dusk
- First Annual Jazz Festival
- Porchfest Afterparty
- Halloween Hunt
- Enchanted Holiday Launch
- Enchanted Holiday Market

We saw our highest pedestrian count with a **weekly count surpassing 5,000 visitors** at Downtown @ Dusk.

“We look forward to more street festivals with live music because this event was a blast!”

- Survey Respondent, Porchfest Afterparty



Photo by Andrew Clarke

### MEDIA COVERAGE

Downtown Belleville received positive coverage across Ontario:

- Web traffic during Downtown @ Dusk received a total of 8000 pageviews
- Influencers from Toronto documented the offerings on their own platforms
- Global News Kingston
- Bay of Quinte, Blog BOQ and Discover Belleville coverage

“We truly enjoyed family friendly events this year and look forward to making more memories in 2023”

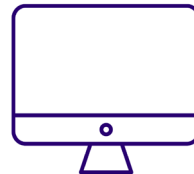
- Survey Respondent, Halloween Hunt



## Digital Presence

### SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2022, we have increased our followers both on Instagram and Facebook, continuing momentum from 2021. Visitors are wanting to 'be a part of it' and are frequently sharing their photos and experiences Downtown. Our feeds contain a blend of on the street, event, blog and business promotion content to keep our audiences engaged and informed.



**9%**  
Increase in  
Instagram Followers  
(From 7,405 to 8,024)

**10%**  
Increase in  
Facebook Followers  
(From 8,072 to 8,884)



@DowntownBelleville



@BellevilleDowntownDistrict

### THE STATE OF THE ONTARIO TOURISM INDUSTRY REPORT

- The tourism industry faces ongoing workforce challenges and a multi-faceted labour crisis.
- There are under-explored markets that can attract more international visitors and highly skilled workers to the tourism industry in Ontario.
- Gaps in public transportation need to be addressed within and between Ontario destinations.
- Ontario should be the most attractive place to visit, work and invest in tourism. Prior to the pandemic, the tourism industry was a \$36 billion dollar industry in this province.

\* Executive Summary from Tourism Industry Association of Ontario





# Grants

## A YEAR OF GRANTS

In 2022, the BIA applied for numerous grants that were available for marketing, event activations and community services. This year's total grant funding came to \$237,700.

Grants include:

**\$70,000** from Hastings County to support our Welcoming Streets Program.

**\$75,000** from the City of Belleville to support Downtown at Dusk and branded billboards, including in-kind services for events and the three road closures.

**\$14,000** from the Rural Economic Development (RED) fund for our Summer event Expansion - Street Furniture.

**\$47,000** from the Bay of Quinte Regional Tourism Board.

**\$17,000** from the Reconnect Grant for Downtown at Dusk.

**\$14,700** from the Canada Summer jobs program for Summer Students.

**\$237,700**

Received in  
grant and in-kind  
services in 2022





## Façade Improvement Program

### FUNDING TRADITION

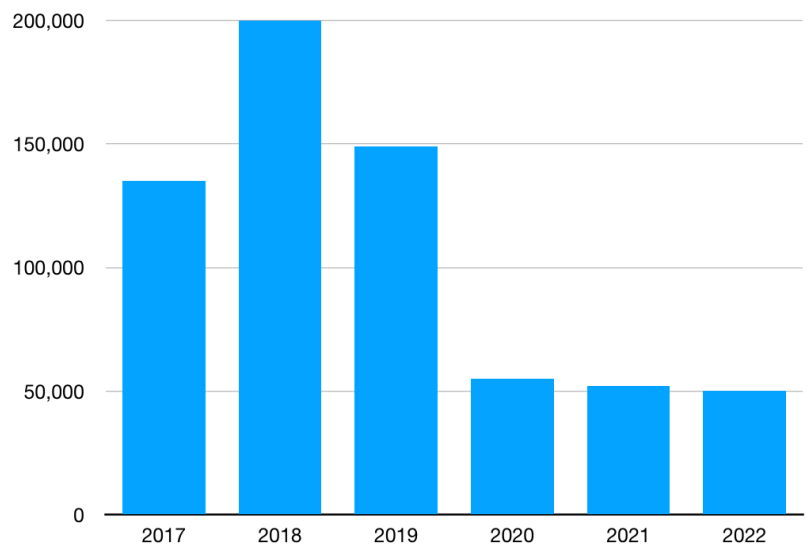
We are fortunate to have many property owners that have the vision and tenacity to breathe new life into our historic Downtown, restoring buildings to their original glory.

The Façade Improvement Program is one of several ways our property owners can access Municipal funds to assist with the cost of restoration.

Details can be found in the City of Belleville's Community Improvement Plan, addressing the Downtown and affordable housing.

**\$50,780**  
Granted from the  
city for façade  
improvements in 2022

**\$648,786+**  
Granted from the City  
of Belleville for façade  
improvements over the  
past 6 years



## Safety & Security Initiatives

We work closely with Belleville Police Services to increase the safety and security of our members, employees and visitors to the Downtown District. Our goal, as per our strategic plan, is to create a Downtown where all people feel comfortable to meet, work, visit and enjoy entertainment.

Thank you to our Community Support Officers, **Sergeant Doucette, Constable Blake, Constable Gervais**, and Belleville Police Services for their ongoing support towards the Welcoming Streets program and our member businesses.

### Initiative #1: No Trespass

Our No Trespass Procedure has been modeled after No Trespass Policies that are being used successfully by the Quinte Mall and the Belleville Library. The adoption of a No Trespass Policy allows participating businesses to bar individuals who have engaged in concerning behaviour in one location from all properties that are listed on the 'No Trespass' list. To opt-in to the No Trespass list, contact our Welcoming Streets Steward at [welcome@downtownbelleville.ca](mailto:welcome@downtownbelleville.ca).



**Sara Behring**  
**Welcoming Streets Steward**

905-933-3755

Monday-Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm  
(occasional Saturdays)

14

Cameras registered  
with CamSafe

200

Safety and Security meetings with  
Stakeholders and Belleville Police Services

38

Workshops offered with 90 participants

102

Unique individuals  
served

550+

Unique interactions

30+

Members currently have Agent Status with  
Belleville Police Services

195

Calls avoided to Belleville  
Police Services

5

Individuals directly housed  
by Welcoming Streets



## *Safety & Security Initiatives cont.*

### **Initiative #2: Agent Status**

Completing an Agent Status form confers upon the Belleville Police Services the same authority as the property and/or business owner(s), namely the authority to prohibit entry to the premises/property and/or remove any person who is prohibited entry. Agent Status gives Belleville Police Services the ability to proactively patrol premises/properties without receiving a formal complaint by its owner(s).

### **Initiative #3: Welcoming Streets and Non-Emergency Line**

The Welcoming Streets Program is accessible to all members, employees and visitors of the Downtown District as a way to establish relationships, navigate social service systems, educate, and provide crisis intervention support to vulnerable community members. Our Welcoming Streets Steward is available during business hours, Monday to Friday and can be reached at 905-933-3755. For more detailed information about the program, contact [welcome@downtownbelleville.ca](mailto:welcome@downtownbelleville.ca). If our Welcoming Streets steward is unavailable, please contact the non-emergency line with Belleville Police at 613-966-0882 Ext. 0.

### **Initiative #4: When to Call 9-1-1**

We are a growing urban centre and as a result, there are instances when you or your staff may witness an emergency situation or an illegal interaction. **Please call 9-1-1 when this happens.**

### **Initiative #5: Community Education**

In partnership with other social services agencies and Belleville Police, Welcoming Streets offers educational workshops to membership on topics such as de-escalation, harm reduction and safe needle handling.

### **Initiative #6: CamSafe**

Belleville Police services encourages businesses to register their camera locations to a centralized database. This allows Belleville Police to access your account info only, not your security system as a way to investigate criminal activity. To register, visit <https://belleville.camsafe.ca>.



*Cst. Nicholas Gervais, Community Resource Unit and Sara Behring, Welcoming Streets*

*For more information on Welcoming Streets and access to related materials visit:*  
**[downtownbelleville.ca/welcomingstreets](https://downtownbelleville.ca/welcomingstreets)**

# *Survey Results*

## KEY FINDINGS

The data presented in this section is collected  
from surveys that were conducted in  
September and October of 2022.

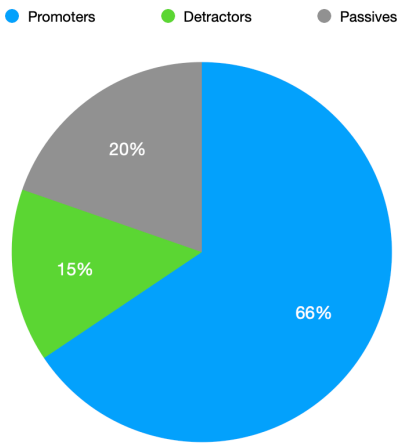


# Visitor & Resident Survey Results

## RESEARCH METHOD

In the month of October, a Visitors survey was distributed by email, through social media and through printed postcards placed in businesses throughout Downtown. The results presented here are based on **165 respondents**.

Visitors & Residents  
rated Downtown  
**7**  
on a scale of 0-10



## RECOMMENDING DOWNTOWN

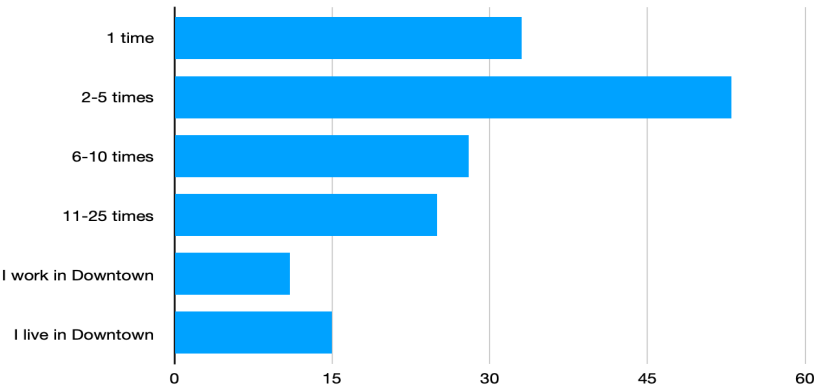
We asked the respondents how likely they are to recommend Downtown Belleville as a place to visit on a scale of 0 to 10. 66% of respondents answered 7 to 10.

The number of Promoters strongly outweighs the Detractors.

## Visitors from outside of Belleville:

- Trenton
- Brighton
- Prince Edward County
- Kingston
- Montreal
- Toronto
- Burlington

## How often respondents visited Downtown in the last 3 months:



## SUMMARY

The majority of respondents visited Downtown Belleville 2-5 times in the last 3 months.



# Member Survey Results

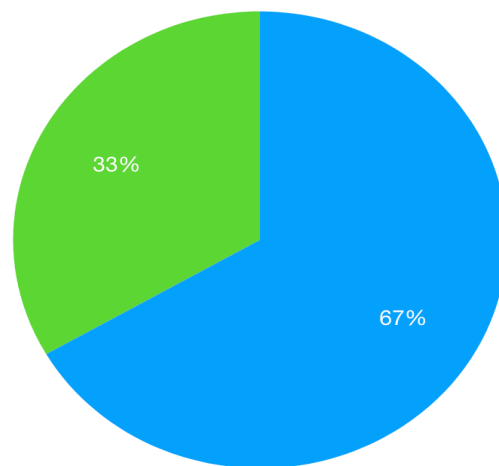
## RESEARCH METHOD

In the month of October we asked members to fill out the annual survey to collect quantitative data from the Business and Property Owners in Downtown Belleville. There were a total of **20 business owners, 3 property owners and 12 business and property owners** that participated in the survey. This is 9 more participants than 2021, we hope to increase the participation next year with incentives to ensure the integrity of our data. Thank you to those who participated.

## Property Owner Results

Property owners indicated their overall satisfaction with Downtown Belleville as a place to invest in the last 12 months:

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



**67%**  
Of property owners are very satisfied with Downtown Belleville as a place to invest

The likelihood of recommending Downtown Belleville as a place to invest in property:

Property Owners  
rated Downtown  
**10 out of 10**



## Top 4 Areas of Improvement

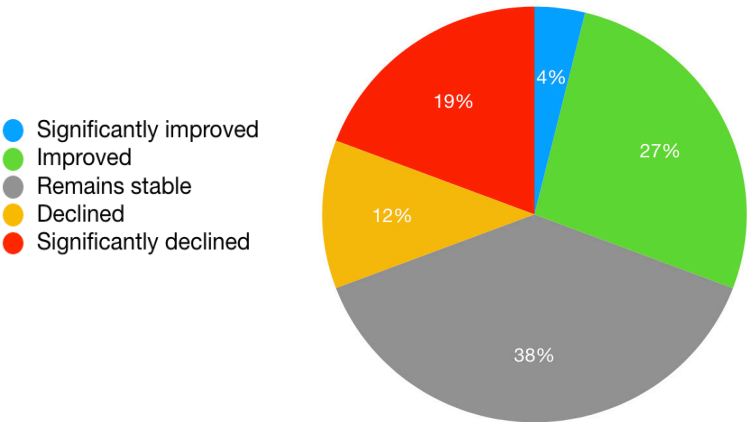
(In order of priority ranked by property owners)

- 1 Parking
- 2 Safety/Security
- 3 Public Perception
- 4 Beautification



# Business Owner Results

Businesses described overall business climate of Downtown in the past year:



**69%**  
Of business owners describe the climate of Downtown as improved or remaining stable.

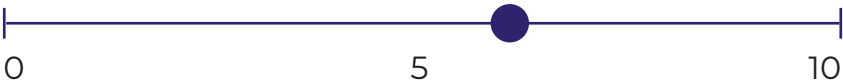
## Top 4 Areas of Improvement *(In order of priority ranked by business owners)*

- 1 Public Perception
- 2 Safety/Security
- 3 Parking
- 4 Vacant Commercial Spaces

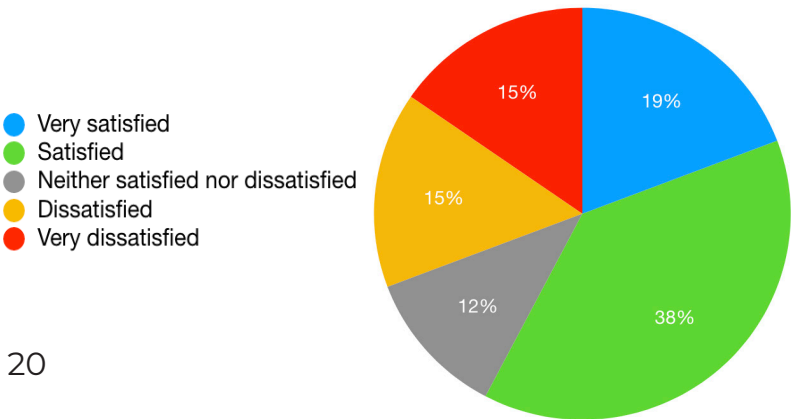


## The likelihood of recommending Downtown Belleville as a place to open a business:

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



## Businesses indicated overall satisfaction with downtown Belleville as a place for business in the last 12 months:



**57%**  
Of business owners are satisfied or very satisfied with Downtown Belleville as a place for business

## Recognized by Provincial Award

We are furthering our promise to create a safe and welcoming Downtown District with the continued implementation of Welcoming Streets. As the Welcoming Streets Steward, Sara Behring responds to situations Downtown that don't require police involvement, creating relationships with vulnerable people on our streets and recommending available services.

By addressing concerns identified by business owners and the public, Sara is helping to build capacity among Downtown businesses to be better equipped to handle concerns and build empathy towards the individuals.



In 2022, Welcoming Streets and the Downtown District BIA were the recipients of **an award** from the **Ontario Business Improvement Area Association (OBIAA)** for Advocacy and Policy in 2022.

“We are so grateful to the OBIAA and the judges for acknowledging the incredible work of Sara Behring and the impact that the Welcoming Streets Initiative has had in the Downtown District. I would also like to thank Hastings County for their continued financial support of Welcoming Streets.”



“It’s an amazing feeling knowing that Welcoming Streets is being recognized for its efforts in supporting our community’s most vulnerable individuals. As incredible as being recognized in the category of Advocacy and Policy is, it is important to acknowledge the significant challenges individuals with lived and living experience go through on a daily basis. I hope this recognition continues to raise awareness for those who may be struggling; demonstrating the need to continue projects such as Welcoming Streets as a way to build an inclusive community where everyone feels supported and heard,” said Sara Behring, Welcoming Streets Steward.



## *A year in review*

2022 has been very challenging for the entire Tourism Industry, and we are starting to experience a slow recovery which will continue well into the next couple of years. Through the hardships we were still able to accomplish much; there is a lot to be grateful for and to celebrate including:

- The Welcoming Streets Program funded by Hastings County and delivered by our Welcoming Streets Steward, Sara Behring.
- Over \$237K in grants were received this year.
- Hired new Media & Marketing Officer, Danielle Hanoman.
- Brought back Downtown @ Dusk.
- Launched the New Gift Card Program.
- Accepted the Ontario Improvement Area Association Award (OBIAA) for Advocacy and Policy for Welcoming Streets.
- In 2022, we welcomed three associate memberships: Stay Luxe Spa, Salty Dog and The Local Social House Restaurant.
- In partnership with the City of Belleville, we were able to secure \$463,000 in Federal funding towards the 2023 Patio Program.



## *A Message From Our Executive Director*

The health of the City is directly related to the health of the Downtown. It's beyond beautification; it's a sense of belonging. It's the feeling that you want to go downtown to create lifelong memories. We have been working on and continue to see a shift in perception, but we still have work to do. When things get tough - as they have been this past year - it can be challenging to see the bigger picture. We get gripped by the moment's emotions, and our energy is channeled into conflict instead of collaboration. In these moments, it helps to look at the problem long enough to understand it; and then focus our efforts on solutions and the way forward – together.

Negativity is contagious. But so are happiness and optimism. Strive to be a reflection of what you want to see in others and around you. When we focus on finding solutions together - we see what's possible. By sharing our skills, ideas and passions – we create opportunities for one another – and the whole - that we could not achieve alone.

The main street is powerful because we are a community.

Let us find the wisdom to let go, listen, adapt and trust that the growing pains are worthwhile. Let us walk through our downtown district with a genuine sense of curiosity and openness. Let us use our energy to create, grow, and support one another. Let us choose courage over comfort, kindness over criticism. And then, together, let us witness this community blossom.

Be proud of yourselves for all the times you kept going. This community is stronger because of your perseverance.

For 2023, we plan to continue with this culture change, and we count on your support to help us become a premier tourism destination.

2023 Events will include:

- Savour the Chill
- Spring into Treasure
- Downtown at Dusk
- Al Fresco
- Jazz Festival
- Porchfest After Party
- Halloween Hunt
- Enchanted Holiday Market

**- Luisa Sorrentino, Executive Director**



*This report and other Downtown Belleville materials are available online at*

**downtownbelleville.ca**

*Be a  
Part of it*



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