



PRESS RELEASE

Welcoming Streets Program Continues in Downtown Belleville

Belleville, Ontario, November 28, 2022 - The Downtown Belleville Business Improvement Area (BIA) has been hard at work to support our local businesses and the vulnerable population through the Welcoming Streets Program. Today the Executive Director, Luisa Sorrentino, presented to Council to seek funding to extend and expand their Welcoming Streets Program for 2023. Since June 2021 and until December 31st 2022, Welcoming Streets has been funded by Hastings County.

The Downtown Belleville Business Improvement Area (BIA) has received funding in the amount of \$140,000 from the City of Belleville to support the program in 2023. The program will continue and expand as a second Welcoming Streets Steward will be added.

The presence of a Welcoming Streets Steward, Sara Behring, has had a positive effect on the community as she bridges the gap between business owners and the vulnerable population. She works closely with individuals experiencing homelessness and business owners to offer support, resources, materials and workshops. There has been a reduction in calls to local police departments as downtown businesses have the ability to call Welcoming Streets for direct support.

"I am beyond grateful to learn that we've been successful in securing 2023 funding for Welcoming Streets. This support from the City of Belleville will allow the opportunity for our significantly disadvantaged community members to continue receiving the assistance they very much deserve, while simultaneously creating a downtown community based upon empathy and inclusiveness."- says Sara Behring, Welcoming Streets Steward.

"It is comforting to know that the city supports the vision of a healthy and inclusive downtown core that helps address systemic issues while elevating the profile of the Downtown District." says Luisa Sorrentino.

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BELLEVILLE

Welcoming Streets is an award-winning program that will continue to change the perception of safety and elevate the Downtown District's profile.

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