



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Downtown District BIA Seeks Funding To Continue Its Outreach Program In 2023**

Belleville, Ontario, August 8, 2022 - The Downtown District Business Improvement Area (BIA) Executive Director, Luisa Sorrentino (endorsed by Chief of Police Mike Callahan through video), presented to Council to seek support to extend and expand their Welcoming Streets Program in 2023.

"Welcoming Streets offers direct outreach, supporting both downtown businesses and individuals experiencing homelessness. While building trusting relationships and connecting individuals to much-needed services, we are building a community based upon empathy and inclusion," says Sara Behring, Welcoming Streets Steward.

Since June 2021 and until the end of 2022, Welcoming Streets has been funded by Hastings County through *Reaching Home*, a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada.

"With this deputation, we aim to raise awareness and advocate for Welcoming Streets, an award-winning program that fills a gap in the system while changing the perception of safety and continues to elevate the Downtown District's profile. We envision the extension and expansion of this essential program," says Luisa Sorrentino.

The Downtown District is asking for \$130,000 per year for the next three years to cover two full-time outreach workers and operational costs.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

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