

2023 *Annual Report*

The
DOWNTOWN
18 DISTRICT 16



Board of Directors

Executive Officers

Chair: Maury Flunder | Property Owner
Vice Chair: Edie Hauslauer | Property Owner
Treasurer: Rakesh Parmar | Export Grill
Secretary: Lindsay Dransfield | Doki Doki

Directors

Jessica Purchase | Evolve Wellness Studio
Emily Barnett | Tropical Blends
Leah Hamilton | Elevation Hall
Melinda HERN | Tinkered Decor & More
Nick Boretski | Boretski Roofing
Matt Leonard | Olympus Property Group
Garnet Thompson | City of Belleville Council Appointee

Staff

Danielle Hanoman | Executive Director
Kasandra Bateman | Events and Marketing Coordinator (Leave)
MacKenzie Bosch | Events and Marketing Coordinator (Temporary)
Sara Behring | Welcoming Streets Program Coordinator
Dallis Hodgson | Welcoming Streets Steward

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!

Our Vision:

By 2025, Downtown Belleville will be the thriving centre of our community.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Stacey Kerr | Scalliwag Toys
Kaya Pereira | Bazaar Artisan Market
Tanya Baldwin | Haus + Hom
Jeff Camacho | Burger Revolution
David Gilbert | Property Owner
Chad Guziewicz | Tire Wizard, Rentify
Emma Travis | Be Prepared
Sarah Hutchison | We Thrive
Tyler Allsopp | City of Belleville Council Appointee
Luisa Sorrentino | Executive Director
Nik McEwen | Welcoming Streets Steward



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.



PHOTO BY NICKSON-SILVA

Message from the Chair

2023 saw so much change so many new initiatives I can confidently say it will be difficult for this report to capture it all. What I wish to say is that I experienced a very positive and engaged board of directors and staff all year long that worked very hard to bring positive change to the downtown and I am extremely proud to have been a part of this team.

Our new Executive Director, Danielle, and new Marketing Specialist, Kasandra, were promptly given the challenge by our board to fill a slate of programming for 12 straight weekends of street closure in the summer period. Building on public and member feedback that Downtown at Dusk , Porchfest After Party and Savour the Chill are fantastic examples of what our downtown can be for our community and members, many new and sure-to-be recurring events are now adding to the vibrancy moving us closer to our vision of a revitalized downtown. We saw the 3rd Annual Jazz fest, 2nd annual Caribbean Festival, 2nd annual Jazz Festival, a Buskerfest, a Dog Days of Summer weekend, Performing Arts in the District, a Front Street Fair, an International Culture Fashion Show, Dancing in the District , A vegan food event, music on the street every Friday night and yoga in the streets on Sunday mornings. And, the year is not over yet, building upon our relationships with city and Chamber of Commerce staff, with Quintelicious and Enchanted Holiday Market set to go this fall.

The BIA mandate also continues to include responding to some unpleasant realities that our membership face. Of course, I am talking about the prevailing difficulties associated to homeless individuals and the criminal element. We vigorously pursued continuing funding for Welcoming Streets, now consisting of 2 street stewards who engage the homeless, assist business owners and the police on a daily basis to mitigate issues. We have engaged a service to remove graffiti on our members properties, along with working effectively with city staff and services. We successfully lobbied the city for an overnight security patrol service for the summer period. We renewed our financial commitment to security by contributing \$12,000 toward upgrading Police Services cameras to effectively help bring some criminals to justice. The challenges in this area remain immense and the staff directed by the Board and this membership is taking on the challenge and are committed to continuing to pursue all we can to make things better.

Again, I am extremely proud of the staff and current board of directors efforts in 2023 and look forward to working with all of them to review and improve what worked well and make more positive changes for the years to come.

- Maury Flunder, Property Owner



Highlights

80%

Occupancy rate of street level businesses



202

Total number of active members

230+

direct member calls responded to by Welcoming Streets Steward



Visitors & Residents rated Downtown Belleville

7

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

\$263,522+

Received in grants and in-kind services in 2023



42

new short and long term rental units in 2023

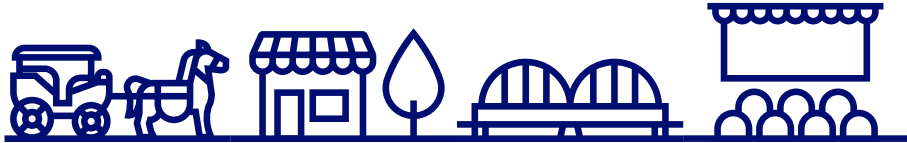
Top 4 Member Priorities:
Based on member survey

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



810+

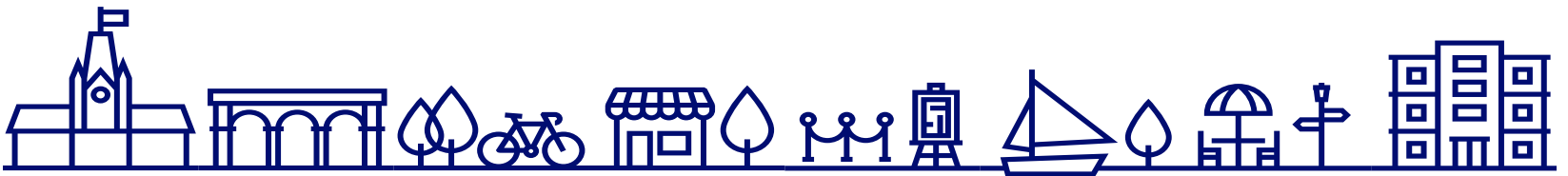
unique interactions by Welcoming Streets Steward



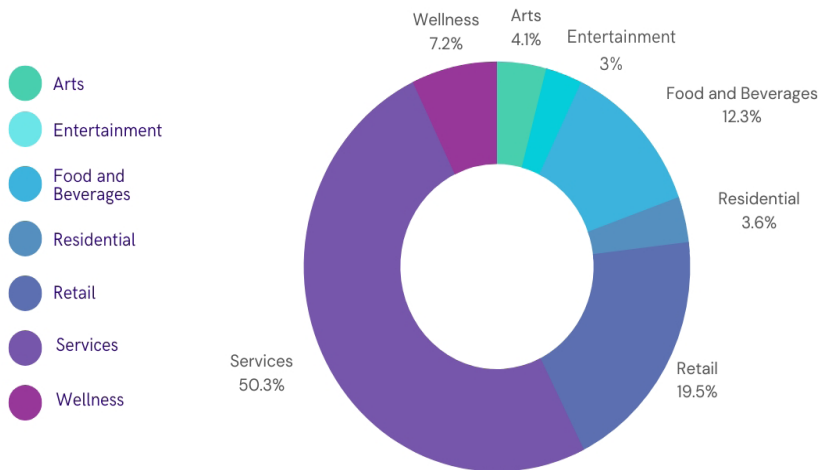
The data presented throughout this report has been collected from a variety of sources including member survey, visitor/resident survey, municipal and government data.

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’s membership is divided into two distinct categories: Services, which encompass professions such as doctors, lawyers, insurance providers, social services, B2B companies, wealth management firms, accountants, and real estate agencies; and Experiential Offerings, which includes businesses in retail, food and beverage, arts, wellness, and entertainment. Additionally, 3% of the membership is comprised of accommodation-related businesses. Experiential offerings constitute approximately 47% of our membership and play a pivotal role in defining the character of our Downtown area, serving as the tourism branch of the District. Services make up 50% of our membership.

Our public-facing message on our social media channels predominantly emphasizes the experiential dimension of the Downtown District, advocating for “investing in the lifestyle” by choosing to both reside and work in this vibrant community.

DIVERSE MIX OF BUSINESSES

- 18 Patios
- 21 Salons/Spas/Wellness
- 10 Cafes
- 4 Banks
- 3 Bike Shops
- 1 Pet Store
- 38 Retail
- 2 Flower Shops
- 16 Art & Leisure
- & more!*



Occupancy Rates

202 Active Businesses

176 Street Level Units

142 Occupied (Street Level)

34 Vacant

7
Street level
properties are
tenant-ready



OF THE 34 VACANT PROPERTIES:

5 are chronically vacant

7 are vacant

15 are under renovation

7 are tenant-ready

80%
Occupancy rate of street
level businesses
(2% increase over 2022)



In a promising trend, Downtown Belleville is experiencing a notable upswing in its occupancy rates. Recent data reveals a 2% increase in the occupancy rate of street-level businesses, marking a significant step forward for the city's commercial landscape. Additionally, the number of chronically vacant units has seen a substantial 27% decrease, underlining the positive transformation taking place in the heart of Belleville.

This positive change can be attributed to a surge in renovation activities, with numerous businesses and property owners investing in upgrading and enhancing their establishments. The renewed energy and commitment to revitalizing Downtown Belleville are not only reshaping the city's physical appearance but also creating a more vibrant and inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. As the trend continues, Downtown Belleville looks set to thrive and become an even more dynamic and bustling Downtown.

Welcome

NEW MEMBERS

This year we welcomed 18 new businesses Downtown.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| McIntyre Vaughan & Co | Benji's Coffee Bar |
| Evolve Wellness Studio | Beckers Shoes |
| Paraphernalia Books N' Stuff | Olympus Property Group |
| Frosty Bubble Bliss | Jumbo Video |
| Hillside House Tattoos | The Shatter House |
| Emma's Bridal | Elevation Hall |
| Stephanie Trattner Photography | Front Street Flats |
| Belleville Dance Experience | Blue Violin |
| Cookie Jar | Barber Art and Décor Amor |

Farewell

CLOSURES

We said farewell to 7 businesses this year, we wish them all well in their next endeavour.

- Hunt on Front
- MoCo
- Haus + Hom
- UWhitening
- Tire Wizard
- Birthright
- Be Prepared



Summer in the Downtown District

STREET CLOSURES

This summer, Downtown Belleville saw a transformation like never before. For twelve consecutive weekends, from Friday through Sunday, the street in the heart of the city was temporarily closed to create a pedestrian promenade.

This year is the first time that City approved barriers were used instead of trucks to block traffic for events. These street closures were organized to promote community engagement, stimulate local commerce, and enhance the overall downtown atmosphere.

PATIO PROGRAM

In 2022, the City of Belleville, in collaboration with the Belleville Business Improvement Area (BIA), launched a highly successful patio program that transformed the summer streets of Downtown Belleville. This program was a remarkable initiative that not only revitalized the urban landscape but also enhanced the overall appeal of the downtown district, fostering a sense of unity and compliance with city standards.



Events

The heart of Downtown Belleville was brought to life through a stunning array of events that graced our district this year. From captivating arts and culture to sizzling food festivals, and soulful music celebrations, these events added vibrancy and a sense of togetherness to our community.

- Downtown @ Dusk
- Games and Goodies
- Performing Arts in District
- Front Street Fair
- Dog Days of Summer
- Jazz Festival
- International Culture Fashion Show
- Buskerfest
- Caribbean Festival
- Vegan/Vegetarian Food Festival
- Dancing in the District
- Blues Festival
- Halloween Hunt
- Quintelicious
- Enchanted Holiday Market
- Savour the Chill
- Spring into Treasure
- Porchfest Afterparty
- Live Music Fridays
- Yoga/Market/Games Sundays



Digital Presence

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2023, we have increased our followers both on Instagram and Facebook, continuing momentum from 2022. 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.



@DowntownBelleville

8%
Increase in
Instagram Followers
(From 8,024 to 8,682)



@BellevilleDowntownDistrict

11%
Increase in
Facebook Followers
(From 8,884 to 9,900)

Welcoming Streets now has a digital presence to keep our members informed on a closed network. We encourage you to follow us on Instagram @WelcomingStreetsBelleville and on Facebook @WelcomingStreets.



Grants

A YEAR OF GRANTS

In 2023, the BIA applied for numerous grants that were available for marketing, event activations and community services. This year's total grant funding came to \$263,522.

Grants include:

\$140,000 from the City of Belleville to support our Welcoming Streets Program.

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

\$7,727 from the Music Performance Trust Fund for our Friday Night Live Music series throughout the summer.

\$35,783 from the Bay of Quinte Regional Tourism Board.

\$5,012 from the Canada Summer jobs program for our Summer Student.

\$263,522
Received in
grant and in-kind
services in 2023



Accommodations

Downtown Belleville is undergoing a remarkable transformation, establishing its reputation as a premier destination for both long-term and short-term accommodations. The growth in Downtown Belleville's housing options is nothing short of spectacular, with approximately 42 new units in 2023 and a promising 50 more units under construction for 2024.

Downtown Belleville's growth in accommodations is a story of progress and promise. It reflects the dedication to revitalization and the commitment to providing a welcoming and thriving community.

With a future filled with possibilities, the vibrant heart of Belleville is set to become an even more attractive destination for long-term and short-term stays, offering a blend of modern living and traditional charm that is second to none.

Approximately
42 units
in 2023

Projected
50 units
under construction
for 2024



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER GENTILE AT BLUE-VIOLIN

Safety & Security

Thank you to our **Community Support Officers, Sergeant Doucette, Constable Blake, Constable Crawford** and Belleville Police Services for their ongoing support towards the Welcoming Streets program and our member businesses. Constable Blake is currently away on maternity leave however, we are excited to welcome Constable Josh Woodcock to the CRU team.

As a business owner and valued member of the downtown community, if you would like to speak to a Police Officer about an ongoing issue, need advice, or want to schedule a 1:1, please don't hesitate to email CRU at bps.cru@bellevilleps.ca.



Sgt. Doucette & Cst. Crawford



Cst. Blake (Mat Leave)



Sara Behring
Welcoming Streets Program
Coordinator

welcome@downtownbelleville.ca

25+

Workshops offered

250+

Safety and Security meetings with Stakeholders and Belleville Police Services

200+

estimated referrals made to various essential services

810+

Unique interactions

118

Unique individuals served

160+

estimated calls to Belleville Police Services averted

Safety & Security

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 inappropriate or threatening 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 Coordinator at welcome@downtownbelleville.ca.

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). Forms can be emailed to Director of Communications, Kris Gauthier at Kgauthier@bellevilleps.ca.

Initiative #3: Welcoming Streets and Non Emergency Line

Our Welcoming Streets Steward, **Dallis Hodgson** is available during business hours, **Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm**, and can be reached at **343-645-6382**. If our Steward is unavailable, please contact that non-emergency line at **613-962-3456**.

Initiative #4: When to Call 911

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 911 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>.



Dallis Hodgson

Welcoming Streets Steward

steward@downtownbelleville.ca

For more information on Welcoming Streets and to access related materials visit:

downtownbelleville.ca/welcomingstreets

Partnership with Loyalist College

Loyalist College's Applied Research and Innovation Office has partnered with Welcoming Streets to conduct research aimed at enhancing the program's outreach effectiveness while addressing potential gaps in program delivery. The Applied Research and Innovation Office (ARIO) plays a central role in supporting and developing the College's capacity for applied research and innovation. ARIO acts as a major catalyst for economic growth, sustainability, and social development in the region.

This integrated approach brings together industry, community partners, researchers, employees, and students to collaborate on projects that use new or existing knowledge to solve real-world challenges with immediate applications.



Welcoming Streets has had the pleasure of working with their first student, Angali. Anjali is a second year Social Service Worker student from Loyalist College working alongside our Welcoming Streets Steward, Wednesday-Friday until December.



Angali Sasikala
Welcoming Streets Student
Wednesday-Friday

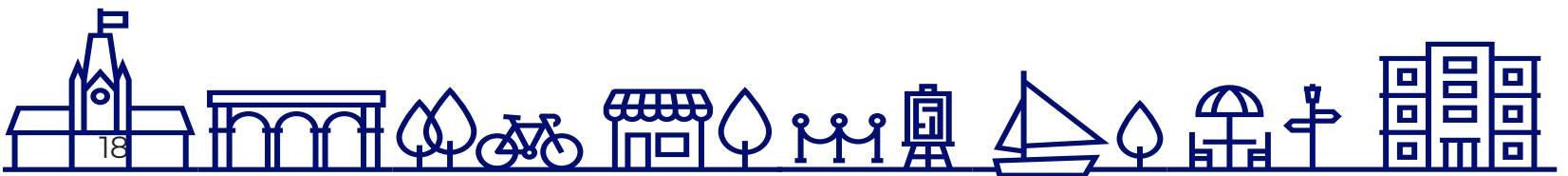


Palakpreet Kaur, Gagandeep Kaur, Preeti Sindhu
Downtown Belleville BIA Students (until December)

Survey Results

KEY FINDINGS

The data presented in this section is collected from surveys that were conducted in September and October of 2023.



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 **51 respondents**.

RECOMMENDING DOWNTOWN

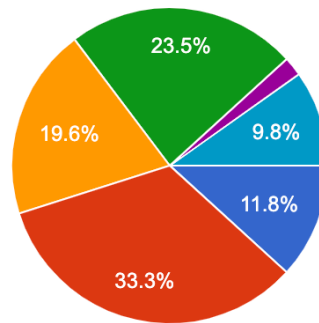
We asked the respondents how likely they are to recommend Downtown Belleville as a place to visit on a scale of 0 to 10. 55% of respondents answered 7 to 10.

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

How often respondents visited Downtown in the last 3 months:

Visitors from outside of Belleville:

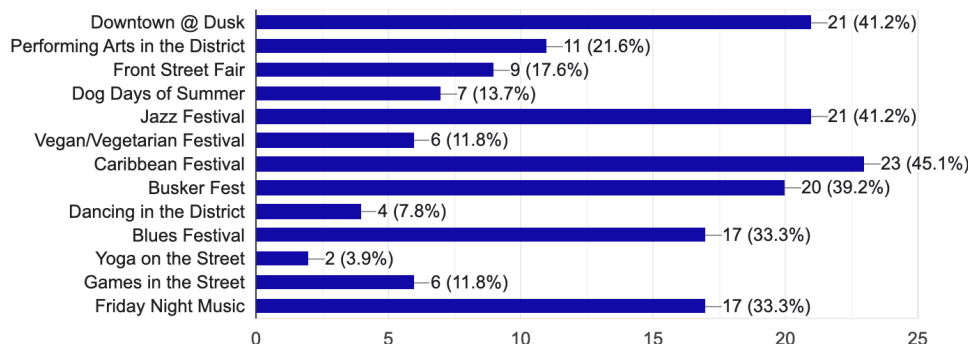
- Quinte West
- Toronto
- Brighton
- Newcastle
- Tweed



- 1 time
- 2-5 times
- 6-10 times
- 11-25 times
- I work in Downtown Belleville
- I live in Downtown Belleville

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

Events respondents attended:



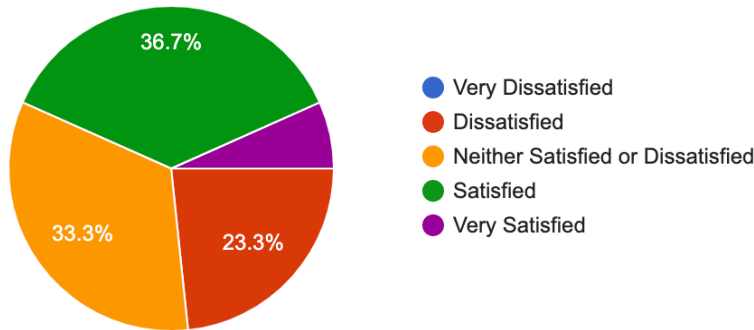
Caribbean Festival was the most popular event among respondents, closely followed by Downtown @ Dusk and Busker Fest.

Member Survey Results

RESEARCH METHOD

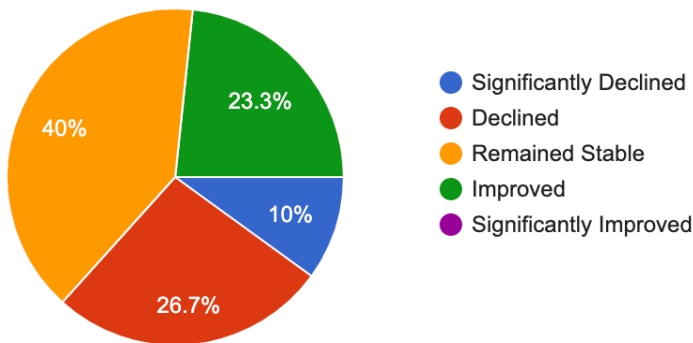
In the months of September and October we asked members to fill out the annual survey to collect quantitative data from the Business and Property Owners in Downtown Belleville. There were a total of **30 members** that participated in the survey. This is eight more participants than 2022, but we hope to increase the participation next year to ensure the integrity of our data. Thank you to those who participated.

Members indicated their overall satisfaction with Downtown Belleville as a place for business in the last 12 months:



76.7%
of members are neutral, satisfied or very satisfied with Downtown Belleville as a place for business

Members indicated how they would describe the overall business climate in Downtown Belleville in the last 12 months:



63.3%
of members describe the business climate as remaining stable or improving in the last year.

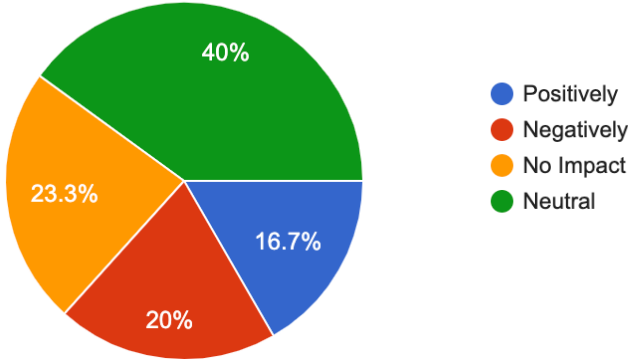
Top 4 Areas of Improvement

(In order of priority ranked by members)

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

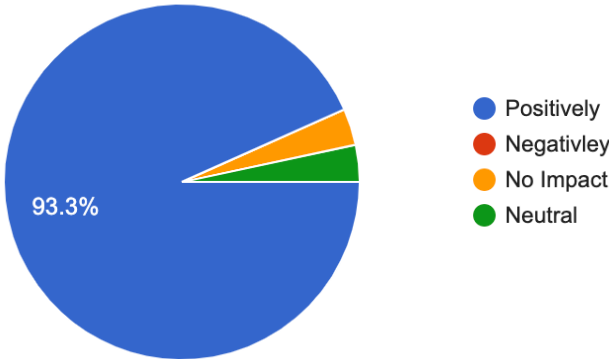


Businesses described how the summer street closures impacted their business:



57%
of business owners saw a neutral or positive impact from the street closures

Businesses described how overnight security measures would impact the economic development of Downtown Belleville:



93.3%
of business owners believe overnight security measures would positively impact their business

“ It has been a “building” year. With many facades completed and new stores/ cafes ready to open next season, I think we are making progress. ”

“ The patios worked really well. ”

“ Welcoming Streets was great and so helpful. Knowledgeable and made me feel more at ease. ”

“ The Friday music really got a following. Some of the events were really well attended! ”

A Year in Review

2023 was a year of transformation, community, and creativity. Our downtown streets came alive with the pulse of local businesses, from charming boutiques to culinary gems, where we discovered the flavors, craftsmanship, and talents that make our town unique. Below is a snapshot of the highlights from this year:

- 20+ events were implemented in the Downtown District
- Hired a new Executive Director, Danielle Hanoman.
- Hired a new Events and Marketing Coordinator.
- Established a partnership with Loyalist College for students and a Welcoming Streets Research Project.
- In partnership with the City of Belleville, the Patio Program was executed and successful.
- The Welcoming Streets Program was funded by The City of Belleville and delivered by our Welcoming Streets Program Coordinator, Sara Behring.
- Hired a second Welcoming Streets Steward.
- First Annual Blues Festival and Second Annual Jazz Festival took place Downtown.
- Murdock Mysteries filmed in Downtown and all around Belleville.
- Downtown Belleville BIA signed the Belleville Workplace Inclusion Charter.
- 18 new businesses opened in the Downtown District.
- Over \$263,522 in grants were received this year.



A Message From our Executive Director

As we look ahead, we remain committed to our mission of creating a thriving, dynamic downtown community in Belleville. We will continue to adapt, innovate, and collaborate to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities.

Downtown Belleville has been on a steady path of revitalization in recent years. With an emphasis on preserving its historical charm while embracing modernity, the downtown has managed to attract new businesses, investors, and residents. Historic buildings have been carefully restored, and streetscapes have been redesigned to create a more inviting atmosphere. Revitalization efforts have attracted both residents and businesses back to the heart of the city, sparking a renewed sense of pride in the community's heritage. This transformation is not only enhancing the aesthetic appeal of Downtown Belleville but is also instrumental in its economic resurgence, making 2024 a year filled with promise and opportunity.

One of the defining characteristics of Downtown Belleville is its tight-knit community. Residents, business owners, and local organizations have worked hand-in-hand to create a welcoming and thriving environment. In 2024, we can anticipate a deeper sense of community engagement, with collaborative events, festivals, and initiatives designed to bring people together and strengthen the bonds of this special town.

The Downtown District has become a hub for cultural and community events, offering a wide range of activities for people of all ages. The 2024 calendar promises an exciting lineup of festivals, art exhibitions, live performances, and signature events that will continue to strengthen the community bonds and boost the local economy.

When I first moved to this area, I had no idea what to expect. It was a leap into the unknown, and I was unsure of what the future held. However, over time, this town's beauty and charm have truly captivated and inspired me. The picturesque streets, the warm sense of community, and the rich history all came together to make this place my home. Now, as I proudly work for the Downtown Belleville BIA, I find myself deeply connected to its mission and the remarkable people who call this place their own. It's been a journey of unexpected discovery and a testament to the magic of this town, which has not only become my home but a source of immense pride and inspiration in my daily work.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your support, commitment, and belief in our shared vision. Together, we can build a brighter future for Downtown Belleville. As we look ahead to 2024, there is an undeniable sense of optimism and excitement in the air. Thank you all for being a part of it.

- Danielle Hanoman, Executive Director



This report and other Downtown Belleville materials are available online at

downtownbelleville.ca

Be a Part of it



downtownbelleville.ca