



DOWNTOWN
LONDON

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

A Message from LDBA's Board Chair and Executive Director

It is our pleasure to present the 2023 Downtown London Annual Report – a year that has seen continued growth, renewed vibrancy, strong advocacy and a significant milestone – Downtown London's 30th anniversary! Over the past 3 decades, Downtown London helped to champion and support many major downtown developments, such as Budweiser Gardens, RBC Place, Forks of the Thames, Fanshawe College's Downtown Campus and Dundas Place, transforming our downtown into the strong economic and cultural heart of our city and a welcoming place for everyone. This is thanks to the hard work of both current and past LDBA staff, board members, City council and administration and many other community partners that are committed to the success of our downtown. We can't wait to see what another 30 years will bring!

Throughout 2023, we saw more events, festivals, street markets, beautiful summer patios, and new murals. Downtown London hosted and sponsored many regional and national events and offered many incentives for attendees to visit and support our downtown businesses. These include the OBIAA Conference, Tim Hortons Brier, Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, and Folk Music Ontario Conference. In addition, Downtown London supported more than 2,300 events bringing more than 1.1 million people to London's downtown.

Downtown London staff proudly accepted an Award of Excellence at this year's OBIAA conference for our 2022 Holiday Window Contest program. It truly means a lot to receive recognition for the work we do on behalf of our members.

We continue to see the transformation of downtown's skyline with a surge in residential growth. From 2011-2022 there has been 27% growth in downtown's population, with 446 residential units opening this year and approximately 1,300 soon to be constructed. As more residents choose to live downtown, they bring a renewed sense of energy and vibrancy to our core. Whether it's grabbing a coffee at a local café, shopping at Covent Garden Market, exploring unique shops, dining at restaurants or going to a theatre production or concert, downtown residents often tell us how much they love living here because of all these great amenities!

The entrepreneurial spirit was alive and well in downtown in 2023 as we worked to support new ventures and welcome new members. Fifty-three businesses called downtown their new home in 2023, including restaurants, retail stores, and personal and professional services.

While we were fortunate to welcome so many new businesses, we unfortunately said goodbye to 22 businesses. Each business owner gave varying reasons that led to their challenging decision to close - shifting consumer behaviours and time-of-day foot traffic, anti-social street activity, increased costs and debt and retirement were some of the reasons. We are very grateful for these businesses and the contributions they provided to our downtown.

We recognize that challenges still exist, and the negative impacts that affordability and the health and homeless crisis have on our vulnerable populations, but also on our community and BIA members. With ongoing dialogue with city officials, community and social agencies, including several open houses and meetings that Downtown London and other partners hosted this past year, your concerns and requests for support were clearly heard. It is through our collective voices that Downtown London was able to secure one-time funding of \$1.16 million from the City of London to support downtown and our businesses with the daily impacts of health and homelessness. We are very grateful to our City Council for their support. These are key investments that the city is making for cleaner streets and sidewalks, improved security , beautification, more welcoming public spaces, and feet on the street. It also offers direct financial support for our members to help them recover out-of-pocket costs for vandalism and property damage, updating and beautifying storefronts, and enhancing their property's security equipment.

Your board and staff are here to listen to your ideas and concerns. Please contact us any time. We look forward to our continued work together in the coming year!



Scott Collyer
LDBA Board Chair



Barbara Maly
Executive Director

2023 LDBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Scott Collyer
LDBA Board Chair



Steve Pellarin
LDBA Vice-Chair



Bonnie Wludyka
LDBA Board Treasurer



Michelle Giroux
LDBA Board Secretary



Carloynn Conron
Director



Councillor David Ferreira
Director



Asaad Naeeli
Director



Kristin Nielson
Director



Marcello Vecchio
Director



Michael Pottruff
Director





Michaelanne Hathaway
Director



Nick Vander Gulik
Director



Keith Brett
Director

2023 LDBA STAFF



Barbara Maly
Executive Director



Vicki Smith
Operations Manager



Kathy McLaughlin
Manager of Business
Development



Hailey Etchen
Manager of Programs
and Partnerships



Jocelynn Aubertin
Communications and
Social Media Coordinator



Mara Fraccaro
Administrative
Assistant

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ACT MANDATE

Business Improvement Areas are legislated under the Ontario Municipal Act to:

- oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned lands, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally
- promote the area as a business and shopping area

MARKETING & PROMOTION



MAINTENANCE & BEAUTIFICATION

DOWNTOWN LONDON VISION AND MISSION

Vision:

Downtown London represents a thriving, progressive, and welcoming district in the heart of the city. The people that own businesses, visit, work, learn, and live in the district are the essence of its vibrancy and diversity.

Mission:

Downtown London represents and supports its members, fostering a strong, thriving downtown in the economic and cultural heart of the city of London.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Foster a welcoming, safe and vibrant downtown



Grow a diversified economic base



Ensure strong member engagement and support



Be a champion, catalyst and liaison for the downtown

WELCOMING AND VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

2,335

**DOWNTOWN
EVENTS**

1.1 M +

**DOWNTOWN EVENT
ATTENDEES**





Downtown for the Holidays

November 24th to December 31st, 2023

150K+

EVENT ATTENDEES

18K

FREE CAROUSEL RIDES

70

BUSINESSES PARTICIPATED
IN THE HOLIDAY WINDOW
DISPLAY CONTEST

6K+

HOLIDAY WINDOW
DISPLAY CONTEST
VOTES SUBMITTED

BEAUTIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE

1,334

STOREFRONTS
POWERWASHED

753

INDUSTRIAL SIZED GARBAGE
BAGS COLLECTED

344

SHARPS COLLECTED

1,033

GRAFFITI TAGS REMOVED





PLACEMAKING AND VIBRANCY

216

SEASONAL BANNERS INSTALLED

**RICHMOND
ROW**
FASHION
FOOD
WELLNESS
CULTURE
LONDON

**RICHMOND
ROW**
FASHION
FOOD
WELLNESS
CULTURE
LONDON

**RICHMOND
ROW**
FASHION
FOOD
WELLNESS
CULTURE
LONDON

22

PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS

140

PLANTERS INSTALLED

DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIC BASE



53

NEW BUSINESSES OPENED

24

ANNIVERSARIES PROMOTED

1

BUSINESS EXPANSION

20

GRAND OPENINGS



STRONG MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

GRANTS PROVIDED TO MEMBERS

\$61,077

Downtown London Grants

\$710,134

City of London Grants and Loans

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

45%

Newsletter open rate - an 18% increase from 2022

70

Business Insider newsletters prepared and distributed

MARKETING

66,692

Social Media Followers

43,981

Website visits

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

118

Annual LDBA member survey responses

5

Member Mixers - regarding Health and Homelessness, construction, naloxone training, etc.

179

Member Mixer Attendees



170

Members participating in Downtown London gift card program

\$113,605

Downtown London gift cards distributed

390%

Average up-spend of gift card users

\$32,630

Construction dollars distributed and redeemed



CHAMPION, CATALYST AND LIAISON FOR THE DOWNTOWN

In 2023, Downtown London advocated and helped advance the following:

- Referred and advocated for support for 284 member incidents
- Extension of 2 hr Core Area free parking deadline to March 31, 2024 from December 31, 2022
- The inclusion and participation of a business reference table, as part of the Health and Homelessness Whole of Community Response
- City Council endorsement of \$1.16 million for 2024 member grants and programs to address Health and Homelessness impacts
- Contributed to the development of downtown business cases for the City's Multi-Year Budget, 2024 to 2027, based on downtown and member needs
- Influenced aspects of the review of the 5 year Core Area Community Improvement Plan
- Defended the City's London Plan, opposing a 30,000 square meter mall-to-office conversion outside of downtown
- Facilitated a member and City staff meeting to provide feedback on the proposed Central Ave Cycling Lanes which helped minimize parking impacts



A promotional graphic for Core Area parking. It features a green 'P' sign icon, a blue arrow pointing down, and a white car icon. The text reads: "Use promo code 'CORE' to access two-hour FREE parking in the Core Area". Below this, it says "Download the HONK app or call 519-661-4537". A dark blue banner at the top right says "Thank you for supporting local!". The background shows a stylized city skyline with a heart icon.

- Contributed to the City's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan by prioritizing actions to enhance downtown economic development, livability, commercial occupancy, events, vibrancy and safety
- Secured City Council endorsement for a Downtown Master Plan with long-term (10+years) revitalization goals
- Advocated for the creation of a senior-level downtown champion and office at City Hall to improve coordination of services and support for downtown revitalization efforts

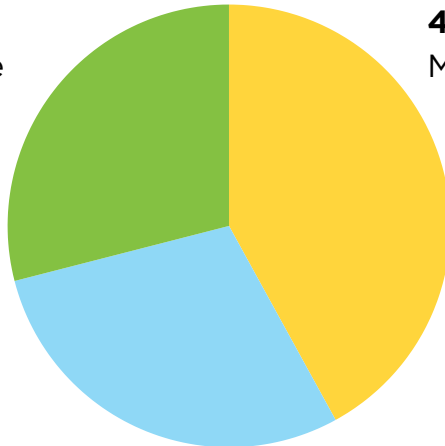


Levy Breakdown

2023 Levy of \$1.93 million

29%
Clean & Safe

42%
Marketing & Events



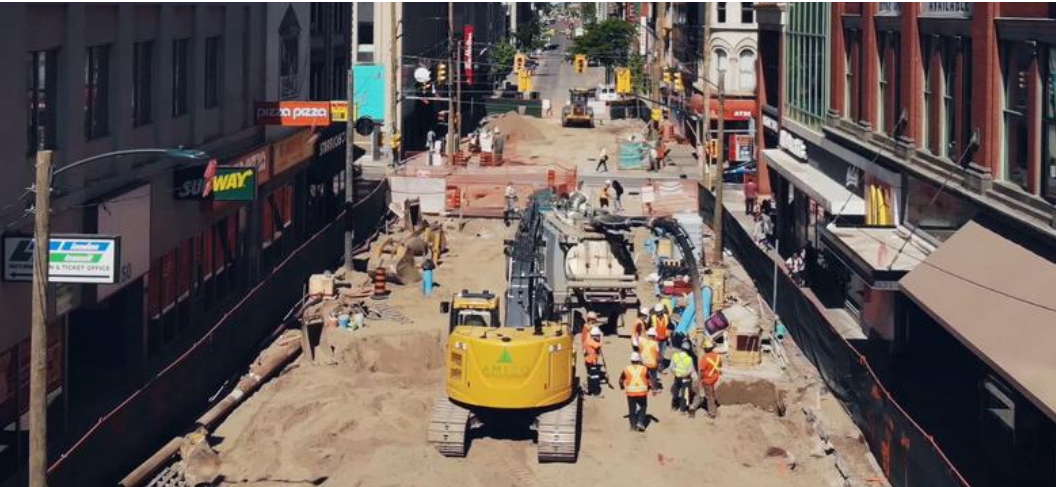
29%
Member Services & Grants

In addition, Downtown London secured government funding and sponsorship totalling \$100,580 to support BIA programming

CELEBRATING DOWNTOWN LONDON

Downtown London celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023!


Over the years Downtown London was an active participant, creating and attracting signature events and festivals, championing and supporting major developments, shaping our city's dynamic identity, and welcoming thousands of people to enjoy all that downtown and the city has to offer.




CHEERS TO A YEAR OF SUCCESS

Downtown London created two new awards recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to London's downtown.



 **Business Excellence Award**
Jill Wilcox, Owner of Jill's Table

 **Gerald Gallacher Heart of Downtown Award**
Jim Yanchula, City of London



The BIA was awarded the **Award of Excellence** for our Downtown for the Holiday's Window Contest and Grant.



Winners of the 2023 Holiday Window Contest




1st place: London Bicycle Cafe



2nd Place: Taz Hair Co.



3rd Place: Stache Fabrics and Notions



Downtownlondon.ca
519-663-2002
info@downtownlondon.ca

facebook.com/downtownlondon
instagram.com/downtownlondon
twitter.com/downtown_london
tiktok.com/@downtownlondon