



# 2023 Annual Report



Downtown  
**Kingston.ca**  
a true original.

# from the Executive Director

## Marijo Cuerrier



### Proud Moments

Waawaateg Installation

OPTIC Installation

Limestone City  
Blues Festival Finale

Salsa in the Square

+ 2M Downtown  
Dollars sold

Gift Card Launch

Welcoming Streets Pilot

Launch of the  
Downtown Dish

3 Princess Street  
Promenades

Largest Santa Parade

+23K Instagram  
followers

This past year has been a year of change and opportunity in downtown Kingston. With over 140 event, programming and installation days in 2023, the team at the office has earned their stripes as a top-ranking crew.

The transformation of the Downtown Kingston brand in just one short year has not been an easy task. Using multi-layered communication strategies, along with authentic photos, video and stories that resonate with a diverse audience, Downtown Kingston has been able to maintain and pick up its stride in a somewhat challenging year.

Business participation and engagement in events, programming and committees and has been encouraging, which is essential for the overall success of our community.

Our relationship with the City of Kingston staff has been of tremendous value as we focus together on the fine details of the experience for people who visit, work and live in the downtown core.

Seeking out and fostering collaborations with other organizations and communities has allowed us to develop valuable partnerships that extend far beyond our reach if we were to do it alone.

This beautiful city is one-of-a-kind. **A true original.** The crew at the BIA are passionate about our commitment to you and will continue to cultivate a community of shared joy, pride, optimism and prosperity in downtown Kingston.



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Respectfully acknowledging that Downtown Kingston resides on land which is the traditional territory of the Huron Wendat, Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, we work towards deeper understanding by engaging in relationship and teaching.

Photography: @garrettelliott and @chloeliuphotography  
Illustration: bmdodo.com



# Board of Management.

With one year under their belt, the new Board of Management has jumped right in, focusing on the future of the downtown Kingston community and producing a strong, forward-thinking Strategic Plan.

## The Board of Management - Executive Committee

### Chair

**Christine Ray-Bratt - Owner**

Chris James/Curate.Social

### Vice-Chair

**Gord Dalton - General Manager**

Confederation Place Hotel

### Treasurer

**Nick Waterfield - General Manager**

Chez Piggy/Pan Chancho

### Past Chair

**Ed Smith - Owner**

Windmills Café Ltd

WCL Kingston Holdings Inc.

**Melissa Eapen-Bell**

**Director of Business Development**

Improbable Escapes & Visual Menace Creative

**Stephanie Quick - General Manager**

Delta Hotels by Marriott Kingston Waterfront

**Steve Wallace - Owner**

Luce Hair Studio

Downtown Kingston BIA meetings take place on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:00 pm. Downtown Kingston business and property owners are always welcome, just give us a heads up that you wish to attend! If you are not a member and would like to join us, please contact the office prior to each meeting so we know to expect you.



## Board of Management Directors

### **Gennaro DiSanto - CEO**

CaraCo, 168 Wellington S

### **A.J. Keilty - Owner**

Keilty Realty Corporation

### **Nicole Kemp - General Manager**

Kingston Frontenacs Hockey Club

### **Colin Morris - Owner**

Kingston Frameworks

### **Yassmine Nassereddine - Owner**

Sabaya Spa

### **Stephanie Quick - General Manager**

Delta Hotels

### **Alex Splinter - Real Estate Analyst**

Braebury Properties

### **Tina Yan - Owner**

Midori Gifts

## City of Kingston Councillors

### **Councillor Vincent Cinanni**

District 9, Williamsville

### **Councillor Gregory Ridge**

District 11, King's Town

### **Councillor Gary Oosterhof**

District 1, Countryside

## Ex-Officio

### **Lanie Hurdle - CAO**

City of Kingston

### **Megan Knott - CEO**

Tourism Kingston

### **Rob Tamblin - Business Development Manager, Small & Medium Enterprises**

Kingston Economic Development



# Operations & Production Team.

A dedicated group of professionals in their chosen fields who are passionate about the future success of downtown Kingston and its business community.



## Senior Staff

### Executive Director

Marijo Cuerrier

### Chief Operating Officer

Michele Langlois

### Director of Events

Jan MacDonald

### Marketing Manager

Pete Gillespie

## Support Staff

### Administrative Assistant

Angela Winkler  
(Maternity Leave)  
Katie Woodcock

### Events Coordinator

Sandi Griffiths

### Marketing & Communications Producer

Sierra Saikaley

### Marketing and Events Producer

Nayeli Salazar

## Welcoming Streets

### Welcoming Streets Steward

Jason Wilde

### 2023 Budget/Levy

<b>Levy</b>	<b>Government Funding</b> (Municipal, Provincial, Federal)	<b>Supplementary Funding</b>	<b>Budget</b>
\$1,474,134	\$383,000	\$124,171	\$1,878,564

### 2024 Budget/Levy

<b>Levy</b>	<b>Government Funding</b> (Municipal, Provincial, Federal)	<b>Supplementary Funding</b>	<b>Budget</b>
\$1,533,099	\$318,000	101,801	\$1,952,900

# Marketing & Communications.

Our plans for 2024 focus on rejuvenated attention to member communications, as well as specific efforts to refine our output using consistent, segmented and targeted campaigns.

We are excited to welcome our new Marketing and Communications Production Manager, Faith Casselman whose insights and abilities paired with Sierra and Nayeli's expertise will elevate communication of the downtown Kingston experience to even greater heights.

Downtown Kingston's social media presence has continued to grow rapidly. With Facebook followers surpassing 21k and Instagram followers gaining over 63% from 14,336 in November 2021 to 23,301 today.

Photo and video capture efforts have built a library with over 21,000 assets ready to use. This collection has improved our social media performance, our web presence, and print/digital advertising, strengthened our brand, and helped build relationships as we assist community partners, 3rd party event producers, and members with their marketing featuring content focused on downtown.

2023 marked the launch of the Downtown Dish, a fully populated online media channel with articles from local influencers, journalists, and BIA members. This new resource is a great way to showcase the personalities and expertise of our membership, a unique point of difference often present in downtown communities.

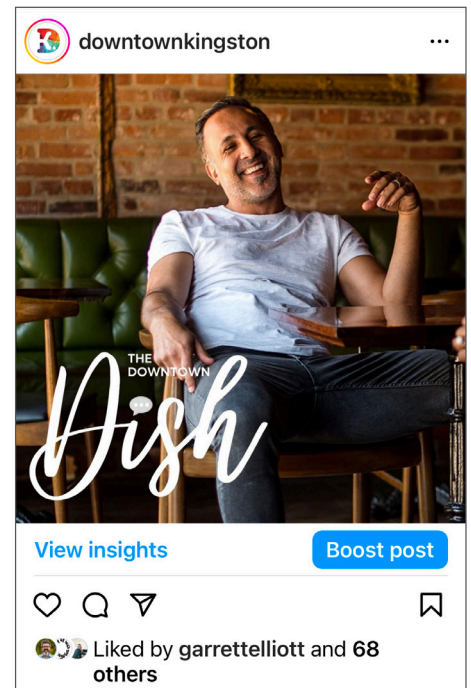
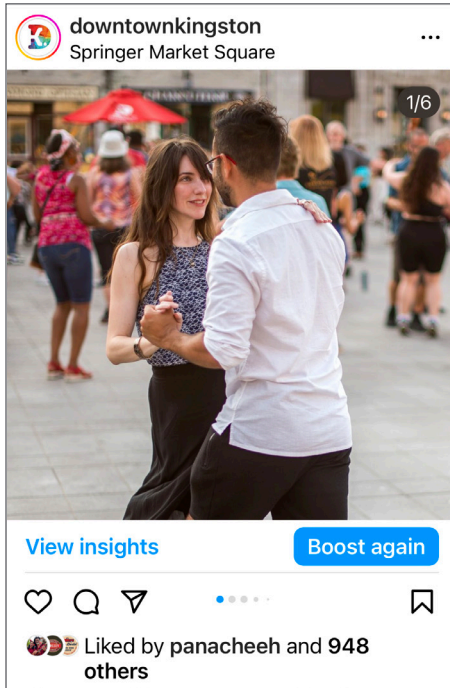
Marketing reach has continued to grow with distribution of 10s of thousands of brochures, posters, event calendars, guides, maps, print ads, A-frame signs, street banners, radio campaigns, digital campaigns and more.

Our plans for 2024 focus on rejuvenated attention to member communications, as well as specific efforts to refine our output in more consistent, segmented and targeted campaigns. Special areas of focus: residents, Queen's University, St. Lawrence College, Canadian Forces Base Kingston, and continued relationship building with 3rd parties whose events align with our strategic priorities.



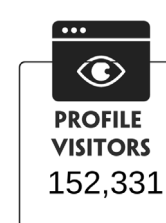
## Downtown Kingston is loved

See a few of the most popular Instagram Posts of the year below. We have an active and engaged audience on both Facebook and Instagram, as well as an average open rate of over 50% for the Downtown Dish monthly email to consumers.



Scan the QR code to subscribe to the Downtown Dish.

A fully populated, online media channel with articles from local influencers, journalists, and downtown Kingston personalities and stories.



# Events & Programming.

The success of Waawaateg in March of this year, speaks to the importance of engaging community members in helping create impactful events.

Waawaateg, which brought the Northern Lights and incredible art installations to Confederation Park, was the result of our ongoing collaboration with local Indigenous groups, a collaboration that we will continue to nurture moving forward.

By engaging the Latin dance community, we enjoyed great success with our Salsa in the Square programming, which was new for 2023. Seeing individuals of all ages and backgrounds come together in dance was truly heartwarming, and we can't wait to bring it back next year.

We also enjoyed a successful partnership with this year's Skeleton Park Arts Festival. Adding a 3rd Princess Street Promenade on festival weekend gave people yet another reason to flock to the downtown core for the day.

To augment our beloved Movies in the Square programming this past summer, we reached out to a range of local businesses and community groups with fun, and sometimes strange, requests and were met with such enthusiasm. An 80s

dance mob, a minion takeover, and ghost stories in the Square are just a few highlights.

Recognizing the importance of introducing change to our long-running festivals, we created a wish list of ideas and set out to make them happen. The learning curve was steep with this one, but we are thrilled with the results. Kingston Buskers Rendezvous saw the first ever Festival Square, created by closing the roads around Springer Market Square and resulting in an enhanced festival feel. Similarly, Limestone City Blues Festival was held entirely in and around the Square with the addition of a licensed area, food vendors and an artisan market in Confederation Park.

Having just wrapped the largest ever Nighttime Santa Parade and our 30th year of pewter collectibles, we are excited to work within the new Strategic Plan to bring dynamic events to the downtown in 2024.

## Event Highlights

### Installations

**Creos Optik** interactive installation on Market Street was a popular destination in February.

**Waawaateg Northern Lights** cultural collaboration with artists and members of the Indigenous community including well-attended opening ceremonies.

**Summer on Sydenham** street pedestrianization pilot including mini-putt, bistro tables and umbrellas, live entertainment, Muskoka chairs and a childrens play area.

**Holiday street decorations** including lights, garland, snow globes, Santa's village, banners, and more to come!

### Signature events

**Kingston Buskers Rendezvous** featuring the new 'Festival Square' experience in Springer Market Square, Ontario Street and Confederation Park.

**Movies in the Square** with new animation features to complement the featured film.

Three **Princess Street Promenades** were executed throughout the summer and fall, bringing thousands of shoppers and foodies to the downtown core.

**Limestone City Blue Festival** saw the addition of a licensed area, food vendors and an excellent partnership with Kingston Holiday Market folks, adding a successful artisan market experience to the weekend.

Largest ever **Nighttime Santa Claus Parade** with over 100 floats and thousands of spectators. The weather was just cold enough to get you in the mood for the holidays. The tree lighting ceremony filled Springer Market Square with at least 2000 spectators. Santa was a busy man!

**\*New\*** Weekly Salsa in the Square. Very popular!

**Skeleton Park Arts Festival** collaboration using the Sydenham St. space for entertainment.

30th anniversary of **Pewter Collectibles**.

# Change is in the air.

As we move forward into the future together, change is inevitable in order to grow as a community. Two significant changes happened in 2024 in order to make room for the evolution of new ideas.

## Downtown Kingston Gift Cards

As digital technology becomes more and more a part of most peoples everyday lives, it was apparent that the hugely successful Downtown Dollars Initiative needed to go digital in order to sustain the program.

The local community has been incredibly supportive of the downtown business community throughout the pandemic, and early results of the new Downtown Gift Card are showing continued support.



## The Limestone City Blues Festival Concludes Its Historic 26-Year Run, Paving the Way for a New Musical Journey

After an incredible 26-year run, the Limestone City Blues Festival is drawing to a close. This beloved annual event has been an integral part of the community, showcasing world-class blues talent, fostering a sense of togetherness, and creating lasting memories for countless attendees.

As a decades-long passion project for the organization, the decision to end the festival was made with careful consideration and an eye toward the future. The BIA is currently working on plans for a new music festival, set to launch in 2025. The new festival will be designed to better reflect Kingston's growing population, and will aim to invite a broader audience to enjoy the experience of a large-scale live music event held in the heart of the city.



# It's about the experience.

Downtown Kingston is a valuable tourism asset and we have a responsibility to ensure that each and every day we prepare for visitors as if it was a day of celebration.

## Pedestrian count highlights

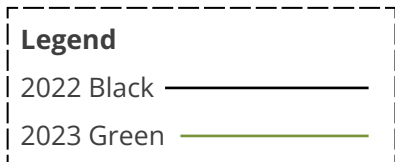
### YTD Comparison Data

Pedestrian counts are up 7.4% overall at 845,929 keeping in mind that the first few months of 2022 we were in lockdown as a result of the pandemic.

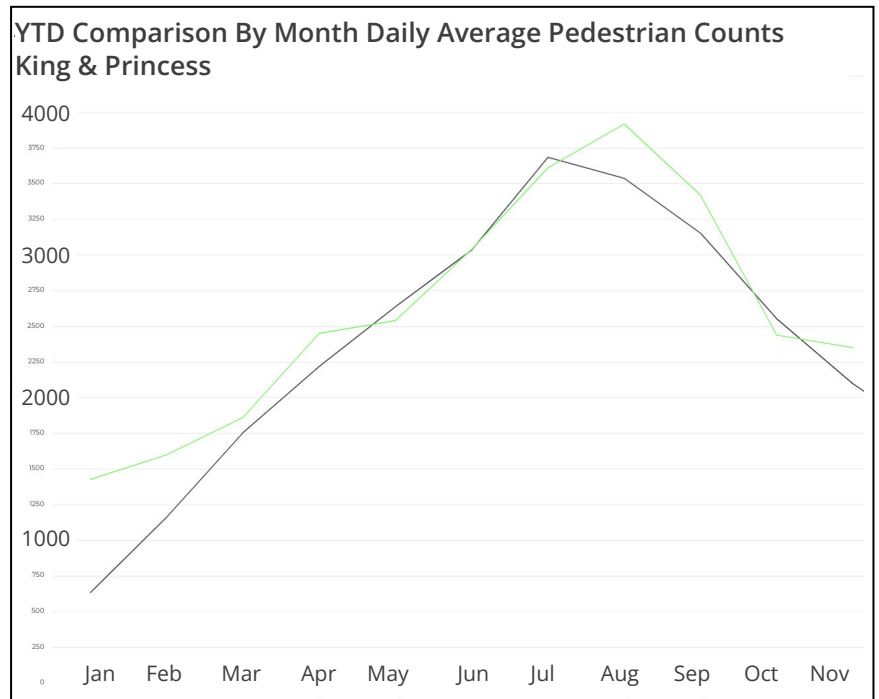
Year-to-date daily average is 2,619.

Peak pedestrian counts were on Saturday, August 5, 2023 where 8,092 pedestrians passed by the counter. This was the weekend when Princess Street Promenade and Poker Run occurred on the same day.

Average weekly pedestrian counts are up 7.6% at 2,329, while weekends are up 6.9% at 3,335.



Note: There are 4 laser counters tracking pedestrian activity 24/7. The initial counter was installed January 2022 at King & Princess. To dive into more detailed reports, reach out to the office.





## Clean & Safe.

The adoption of a ‘curtains up’ mentality each morning helps to create a welcome and inviting space for all visitors.

### Beautification and Cleanliness

Dressing the streets of downtown Kingston for each season is no small task. We work closely with the municipality to ensure that the streets are looking their best with available resources. This past year we received many compliments at the office and at City

Hall about the notable improvement in cleanliness on our streets. This is a direct result of our collaboration with the municipality, in particular the Public Works team in tandem with the BIA Street Crew program.

Together with the city we continue to investigate and test solutions for some big challenges like sidewalk power-washing, commercial and residential garbage management to name a few.

You will notice a number of new benches, some with raised gardens throughout the downtown core, designed to provide esthetically pleasing rest areas for visitors to the downtown core.

## Welcoming Streets

This past July, Downtown Kingston BIA, in partnership with Addiction and Mental Health Services Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (AMHS-KFLA), introduced a new street outreach initiative called Welcoming Streets in Kingston's downtown core.

This collaborative 1-year pilot project aims to create a compassionate, inclusive, and supportive environment for everyone in the downtown community.

The Welcoming Streets initiative serves two significant purposes: assisting individuals to access needed supports and services, while collaborating with local service providers, community organizations, as well as property and business owners, to cultivate a safe,

welcoming, and supportive community that considers the complex needs of all those involved.

The Welcoming Streets Pilot is funded by the Ontario Homelessness Prevention Program and the City of Kingston.

Resources for you and your staff can be found at [member.downtownkingston.ca/welcoming-streets](https://member.downtownkingston.ca/welcoming-streets)

Welcoming Streets is available Monday to Friday  
8:30 am - 6 pm Saturday from 10 am - 6 pm

p; 613-542-8677,  
e: [welcome@downtownkingston.ca](mailto:welcome@downtownkingston.ca),  
GroupMe: Community Support Group







 Downtown  
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a true original.