

Quarterly Update (April - June 2023)

London Downtown Business Association



To LDBA Members, City Council, City Staff, and Partners,

The second quarter of 2023 has brought many exciting events, promotions, and programming to our downtown! We are pleased to be able to report back and highlight some of the outcomes with you.

2023 Ontario Business Improvement Area Association Conference

Downtown London hosted this year's OBIAA conference from April 16-19 at RBC Place. Approximately 300 people attended the conference from across the province, and toured our downtown, as well as the other London BIAs. We provided each attendee with a Downtown Gift Card to spend while they toured and visited many of our fabulous businesses and sights.

Downtown London Award Winner

Downtown London was proud to win the *OBIAA Award of Excellence* for our 2022 Holiday Window Grant and Contest. Seventy-five downtown businesses participated in the promo, with more than 2,000 participants who voted in our contest to determine our top three holiday window displays! We are very grateful and flattered to be recognized.

LDBA Sponsored Events

This spring featured a variety of engaging events that the LDBA helped sponsor, including:

- *April* - approx. 8,445 attendees in total - Earthfest, Punk Rock Flea Market, Ting Comic & Graphic Arts Festival, Vintage on the Block
- *May* - approx. 5,000 attendees in total - Free Comic Book Day, Love Text, Sunfest Dundas Place Block Party
- *June* - approx. 35,650 attendees in total - The London Multicultural Festival, Electric Market, London Beer Fest, and the Forest City London Music Awards.

These events are just some of the 60 different downtown events that Downtown London has committed to sponsoring in 2023 through direct financial support (\$105,500), DTL Gift Cards (\$50,000) and/or DTL in-kind marketing and facilitation support.

LDBA Member Naloxone Training Event - May 17

In partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart (431 Richmond St), DTL provided free naloxone training and naloxone kits were distributed to LDBA members. This event was organized to support businesses in complying with recent provincial legislation changes. As of June 1, 2023 the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) states that businesses in certain circumstances

must provide naloxone and training in the workplace. Fifty-three downtown business owners and employees came to the Downtown London office to participate.

Marketing Campaigns

Downtown London has been running the following marketing and media campaigns over the last few months.

- **Construction Dollar Campaigns**

- *Construction Dollar Radio Campaign* is a partnership with Blackburn Radio and the City of London that began in June and will run until September 1. The main demographic of Blackburn Radio's audience is 35-64 year olds. This campaign promotes downtown businesses through radio ads along with a contest that includes daily prizes of construction dollars for listeners. \$9,000 in construction dollars has been provided to Blackburn Radio for prize giveaways.
- *City Construction Radio Campaign* was a partnership with the City of London that began on June 12 and ran until June 30. The radio campaign encouraged listeners to shop, dine, and experience downtown while construction projects are underway. The ad was played a total of 384 times on the following radio stations: Jack, Easy, FM96, Fresh, AM980, Virgin, and 98.1.
- *Happy Hour* is a collaborative campaign between Tourism London, Downtown London, and The London Economic Development Corporation that is aimed at encouraging people to stay in the Core a little longer this summer. To date, we have worked with 22 businesses – 15 in Downtown and seven in Old East Village - to develop special features for the Happy Hour promotion. To encourage people to take part in this special promotion, customers are encouraged to enter for a weekly prize of \$100 construction dollars until September 4.

- **Downtown Gift Card Campaigns**

- *Discover Downtown Business Spotlight Campaign* highlights individual businesses through DTL's social media channels. The social media feature includes an Instagram reel that highlights the business. So far, the Instagram reel features have accumulated a total of 104,577 views. Each business has also received a \$250 Downtown London gift card to market to their customer channels. To date, 23 businesses have signed up to participate. Members can still sign up to participate and be part of this campaign.
- *Mother's Day and Father's Day Gift Card Discount Campaign* was a social media campaign that promoted a 15% discount on the purchase of Downtown Gift Cards. Each of these campaigns ran for one week prior to Mother's and Father's Day and resulted in \$8,540 in gift card purchases that can be only spent at downtown businesses that are signed up to accept these gift cards.

****Note: With more than \$70,000 worth of Downtown Gift Cards now in circulation and if you are a LDBA member that has not signed up to accept these Gift Cards as a point-of-sale redemption, it is very easy to do and we would be happy to assist you! Please contact info@downtownlondon.ca.***

Spring Planters and Mural Boxes

Spring plants were installed in May and included 65 planters and 20 hanging baskets throughout the BIA. We have also dispersed our mural box planters throughout the downtown. We retained 12 painted mural planter boxes from last year, and added 20 new mural box designs which were curated by local artists.

Storefront Facade Power Washing

The pressure washing service began in May and expanded from two days a week in 2022 to three days, with the addition of another Clean Team staff member. To date, 643 storefronts have been power washed. This service will be available for all downtown business storefronts until November (weather permitting). If you require power washing services please contact info@downtownlondon.ca

Litter and sharps pick-up

There has been a steady decrease in the presence of sharps and litter being found in downtown’s public realm since the last quarterly report. For sharps there was a 52% decrease, while litter decreased by approximately 25%.

Downtown London’s Property Damage Grant

Since the beginning of the year, Downtown London has awarded 16 downtown businesses grants for a total value of \$16,950. This one-time grant of up to \$1,250 per property is available to help members with costs incurred to repair damages to building façades, glazing, and properties due to vandalism, as well as purchasing equipment to help improve the building’s safety and security. These grants are limited and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. More information about this grant can be found [here](#).

The City also has Community Improvement Program (CIP) grants and loans available to LDBA members located within the City’s CIP areas. Since January the City has provided a total of \$566,553 in grants and loans to our members. The following is the breakdown:

Program	Number	Value
Core Area Safety Audit Grant	4	\$13,061
Façade Improvement Loan	1	\$22,246
Upgrade to Building Code Loan	3	\$77,378
Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Tax Grants	5	\$262,080
Brownfield Grants	1	\$191,788

*More information about the City’s CIP grants and loans can be found [here](#)

Business Development and Core Area Vacancy Reduction

Thus far, 35 businesses have opened in our BIA footprint since the beginning of 2023. Downtown London staff have facilitated many of these businesses’ Grand Opening celebrations.

Is your business looking to celebrate a special milestone or anniversary? Please feel free to reach out to our Downtown London team to let us know how we can help you plan a memorable celebration for your business. Email us at info@downtownlondon.ca.

Health and Homelessness - Whole of Community Response

Downtown London staff have spent an important and significant amount of time attending and following up from several half- to full-day meetings. We have been asked to contribute, collect, and follow up on information on behalf of our members on this topic while we participate with the City and other community sector groups at both the leadership and implementation levels of the H&H Whole of Community Response.

LDBA staff are currently participating on the following tables - Strategy and Accountability, Business Reference, Hub Implementation and Systems Foundation tables. Our presence at these tables is critical in regards to our continued commitment towards the Health & Homeless Whole-of-Community Response and having a strong voice at these tables. At these meetings we have strongly advocated, with sensitivity, for more support for our members and have requested assurances that the Whole-of-Community Response includes support for those suffering and dying on our streets, as well as businesses and those in our community that are being directly impacted by the Health and Homelessness crisis.

We have continued to request that the City, H&H committee co-chairs and the communications team contracted to help facilitate the H&H process, establish improved engagement and communications with our members and address their questions and concerns, while gathering and compiling input to better inform decision-making related to economic and business development impacts. That said, LDBA held its first member open house and invited City staff and the Hub Table Co-chair to collect member input on locations for the first 5 Hubs that will offer 24/7 support to assist high acuity populations who are currently homeless. These hubs are planned to begin opening in the Fall of 2023. This open house was held on June 27th with 25 LDBA members attending.

We are cautiously optimistic about language in the upcoming SPPC *Proposed Hubs Implementation Plan* report indicating that these “Hubs should be located outside of the Old East Village and not on Dundas Flex Street or Richmond Row..... (contingent on zoning, available properties, physical space requirements and ability to deliver functions and standards effectively.)”

City's Five-Year Community Improvement Plan Review

LDBA staff and board chair submitted a letter and delegated at the June 12th 2023 Planning Environment Committee to request the continuation and enhancement of current CIP grants and loans currently available to members within downtown's the CIP boundaries. We also requested that City Council take a longer-term and balanced approach when considering both residential and commercial CIP programs to ensure incentives bring not only increased residential development, but also increased commercial development to ensure jobs and

targeted economic development opportunities continue to exist and help revitalize the downtown. The letter LDBA submitted can be found [here](#).

Zoning By-law Amendments of 785 Wonderland Road Inc

LDBA staff and board chair provided a letter to City Council for their meeting on June 27th to request that they not endorse the Planning Application for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments of 785 Wonderland Road Inc. relating to their property located at 755, 785 and 815 Wonderland Road South (Westmount Shopping Centre) and their request to amend Zoning By-law No.Z.-1 to add a mixed-use redevelopment of an existing shopping centre to include a revised 30,000 square metres of gross floor area for a broad range of commercial and office uses. This application has been concurrently [appealed to the OLT](#), and we will continue to follow, and make representations as required. The link to the letter can be found [here](#).

Core Area Strategy Development

Downtown London staff participated in two half-day meetings with City and Old East Village staff to provide input and ideas for the development of *London's Core Area (Downtown, Midtown, Old East Village) - a vibrant neighbourhood and attractive destination* as an area of strategic focus and outcome in the City's new 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. City staff are now compiling the information shared and discussed to develop a new Core Area strategic and implementation plan and budget for consideration by Council in August for the City's multi-year budget process.

Media articles and links

[Barbara Maly: Downtown London Representing A Thriving, Progressive, And Welcoming Business District](#), Made in CA, May 23

[Episode 176: Downtown London with Barb Maly](#), The Craig Needles Podcast, June 13

[City of London extends free downtown parking into 2024](#), CBC London, June 13

[No loitering, good security: Downtown businesses' wish list for homeless hubs](#), London Free Press, June 27

[Empathy turning into frustration for Richmond Row merchants](#), London Morning with Rebecca Zandbergen, CBC Radio One London, February 28

Website & Newsletter Improvements

Downtown London staff have redesigned some features of our website to improve its user experience and ease of finding information that is frequently searched for by visitors to our site. We have also removed outdated information and updated areas as needed, such as our [Member Perks page](#) which now includes special discounts for LDBA members. Additionally you may have noticed updates and changes in the formatting of our newsletter. With these changes our newsletter open rate has increased by 10% from last quarter and our website visits saw an increase of 19,600 new users over the past quarter.

Member survey

LDBA staff just closed our annual Member survey which drew 118 member responses. Our members' feedback provides LDBA with important information to help shape our 2024 workplan and budget. Staff will provide further information on survey results and our 2024 work plan and budget at our AGM in early November. Stay tuned as more details on LDBA's AGM date, time and location will follow shortly.

Staff Work Anniversaries

We celebrated two staff members' work anniversaries this past quarter. Kathy McLaughlin celebrated 20 years, while Vicki Smith celebrated 15 years with Downtown London. Downtown London staff, our boards and members are so appreciative of the work and the contributions these two members have made to our organization and downtown in general. You can learn more about their journey and time with Downtown London and what led them to this point in their careers [here](#).

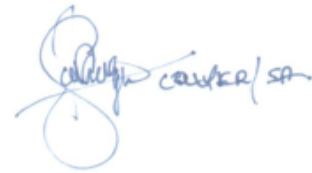
Keeping You Informed

Throughout the second half of this year, Downtown London will continue to update members on new developments, programs, and events happening in our community and our BIA district. Please feel free to contact us or drop by our office if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback for us. We always look forward to connecting with you!

Sincerely,



Barbara Maly,
Downtown London Executive Director



Scott Andrew Collyer,
LDBA Board Chair