

WINDSOR

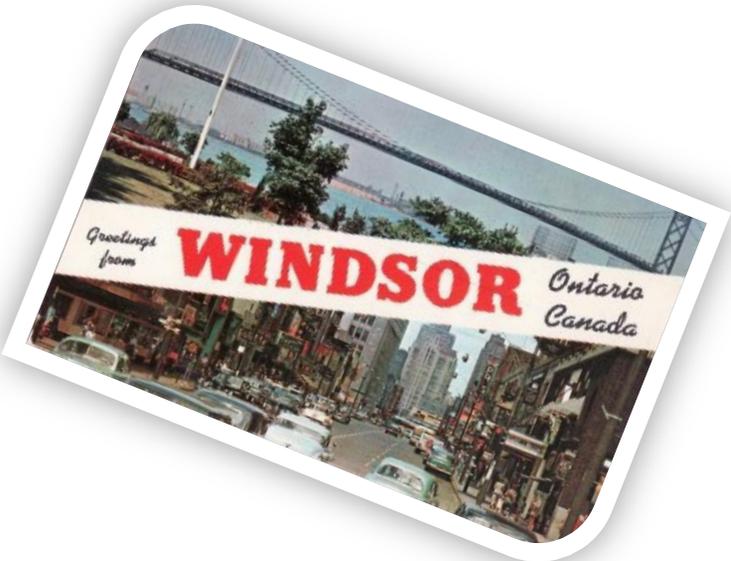
Twin Skylines



Snap Shot of Windsor

- Once known as Ford City – proud history in auto manufacturing
- Canada’s southernmost city, bordering the USA and directly opposite Detroit
- Major international gateway and busiest border crossing in Canada
- Home to University of Windsor and St. Clair College
- Intelligent Community of the Year award in 2010

“We have a spectacular waterfront with uninterrupted access – it is one of our jewels”



Downtown Windsor is beginning to capitalize on its strengths, its exemplary institutional sector, its entertainment functions and its natural assets, to emerge as a more vital core. In recent years, the City has played a critical role in strengthening the downtown and succeeded in building strong partnerships with key stakeholders to propel these revitalization efforts forward. Despite these important gains, downtown Windsor has some way to go to reach its potential. It faces significant challenges in terms of addressing visible vacancies along its main shopping streets, attracting new businesses, growing its job base, filling its office inventory and attracting more residents. Stakeholders in downtown Windsor will need to continue to work together to address these challenges and ensure that downtown Windsor can keep moving forward along the road to revitalization.

Downtown Windsor Timeline

1701 – Sieur de Lamonthe establishes Fort Pontchartrain, the area's first European settlement.

1792 – The Duff Baby House is built by Alexander Duff as a fur trade post. It is the oldest building in Windsor.

1837 – The Battle of Windsor takes place as part of the Upper Canada Rebellion.

1857 – University of Windsor's predecessor, Assumption College, is founded.



1749 – Windsor is settled by the French as "Petite Cote," originally a small Jesuit mission. It is the oldest continually inhabited settlement in Canada west of Montreal.

1794 – The settlement of Sandwich is founded following the American Revolution. It is later renamed to Windsor.

1820-1860 – Windsor served as the end point of the Underground Railroad.

1854 – The Great West Railway (Canadian National Railway) is extended to Windsor, connecting it to the rest of Canada.



1871 – Over one hundred buildings in downtown Windsor are destroyed by a fire.

1904 – The Ford Motor Company establishes a factory in Windsor, marking the beginning of Windsor's most prominent industry.

1935 – The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel is completed and opened to auto traffic.

1966 – Riverside Township, Sandwich East, South, and West, and Ojibway are annexed by Windsor.

1892 – Windsor is incorporated as a city.

1920s – During Prohibition in the United States, Windsor serves as a popular rum-running port.

1963 – The University of Windsor is founded.

1998 – Caesars Windsor opens, attracting many new visitors to the downtown.

2006-2008 – Caesars Windsor undergoes major renovations, adding a theatre, hotel and convention centre.

2011 – Work begins on a western extension of the 401, named Windsor-Essex Parkway, with plans of a new bridge crossing to Detroit.



HISTORIC SANDWICH TOWNE
FOUNDED 1797

2007-2012 – Establishment of St Clair Centre for the Arts.

2008 – The Global Financial crisis hits, with far-reaching consequences for Windsor's automotive sector.

2010 – St. Clair College's downtown MediaPlex Campus officially opens in the refurbished Salvation Army building.

2013 – The Family Aquatic Centre is under construction with an indoor water park and Sports Hall of Fame.

2012 – The University of Windsor begins a project to expand the campus into the Armouries and Windsor Star buildings downtown, with plans to move the Arts and Social Work faculties to these locations once they are completed.



Context Map: Key Assets and Features in the Downtown



Caesars Windsor (1)
Casino Windsor was renamed Caesars Windsor following a large-scale renovation in 2006. The casino has played a large role in downtown Windsor's revitalization. It attracts millions of visitors from around the world. The Coliseum at Caesars Windsor seats 5000 people and regularly attracts high-profile entertainers to the city.

1 Dieppe Garden (2)



This park offers some of the best views of the Detroit skyline and offers needed green space and gardens in the downtown. In 2010, a monument was erected in the park to honour the Canadians who fought in the Battle of Dieppe during the second World War. An Anchor Memorial is also located here commemorating Canadians who fought in the first World War.

2



Odette Sculpture Park (3)
This waterfront park runs between the Ambassador Bridge and the Art Gallery of Windsor. It includes walking and biking trails, and features 31 large-scale contemporary sculptures.

18 Festival Plaza/Civic Terrace (4)



The Riverfront Festival Plaza is a 100,000 sq ft waterfront park. It is a popular gathering place and a frequent venue for festivals and entertainment. Bluesfest International Windsor, Festival Epicure, Beaverfest, and Windsor Ribfest are among the many events held at the plaza. Renovations featuring a \$3.6 million stage complex began in 2011.

4



Art Gallery of Windsor (5)
The Art Gallery of Windsor was established in 1943 and began building its own collection the following year. In 1975, the Art Gallery moved into a renovated brewery warehouse on the city's waterfront. In 1999, the warehouse was torn down and in 2001 the new Art Gallery of Windsor building opened in its place.

5

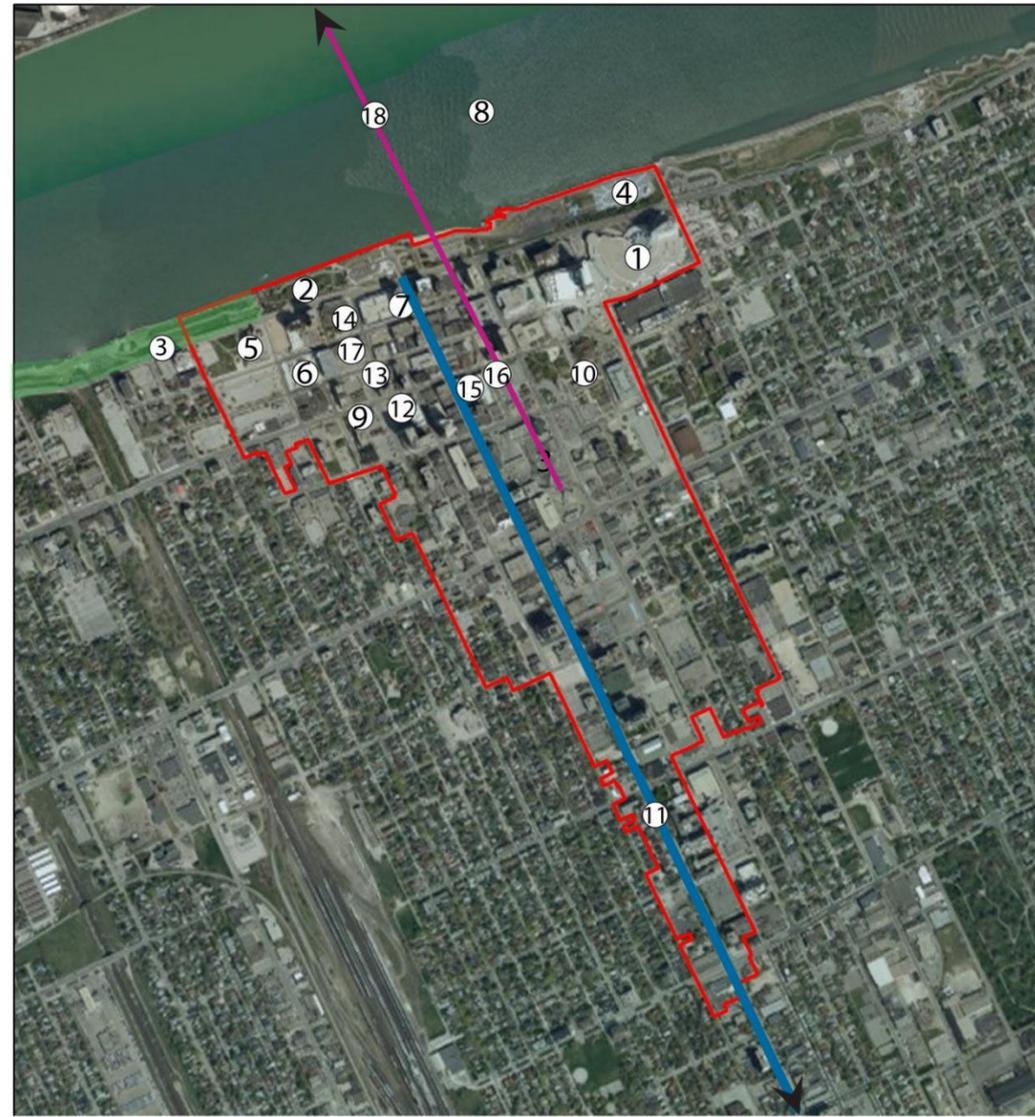


Windsor Transit Terminal (6)
The downtown bus terminal was renovated in 2007 and is now jointly used to support local and regional transit, as well as Greyhound Canada.

6

One Riverside Drive (7)
Built in 2002, One Riverside Drive is the newest high-rise office tower in Windsor, at 14 storeys. The City of Windsor expropriated several parcels of land in order to build the building, which is now the headquarters of Daimler-Chrysler Canada.

Detroit River (8)
Windsor sits on the south bank of the Detroit River, while the City of Detroit is situated on the north bank. Conservation efforts to preserve the river began in the 1960s. It was designated an American Heritage River in 1998 and a Canadian Heritage River in 2001.



Source: Flash Earth
— Downtown Boundary
— Odette Sculpture Park
— Detroit-Windsor Tunnel
— Ouellette Avenue

Farmers Market (9)
Started by the Downtown Windsor BIA, the downtown farmers market is now run by the Downtown Residents Association. It has a new home at Charles Clark Square, close to City Hall.

Windsor City Hall (10)
In the early 1800s, housing was built for newly-arrived Underground Railroad refugees. Since 1861, the City hall Square was known as the "Barrack Square". Later, the Central Public School was built on the site and was a source of conflict over the racial segregation of students. In 1956, the school was demolished and the City Hall was built.

Ouellette Avenue (11)
Ouellette Avenue is main corridor in downtown Windsor. It is the main thoroughfare of the downtown, and features multicultural restaurants and vibrant nightlife.

Capitol Theatre (12)
The City took the lead in saving the Capitol Theatre after it declared bankruptcy. The City refurbished it and it is now the home of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

St Clair College – Mediaplex (13)
The MediaPlex is a satellite campus of St Clair College in the heart of downtown. It offers journalism, public relations, tourism, travel and media convergence programs.

St Clair College – Centre for the Performing Arts (14)
The new St Clair College of the Arts houses 700 students. This campus also includes the former Chrysler Theatre, which continues to host a range of high profile events and performances.

Windsor Star Offices – Former Palace Theatre (15)
The Windsor Star has moved to the former Palace Theatre, which has gone through a major renovation to be turned into a quality office space. The Windsor Star has had a strong commitment to contributing to the revitalization processes in downtown Windsor.

University of Windsor Arts Campus (16)
The University of Windsor is looking to establish an arts-related campus in the Armouries building, and also in the former Greyhound Depot on the opposite side of the street, serving approximately 500 students.

University of Windsor School of Social Work (17)
The University of Windsor has purchased the former Windsor Star building and is converting it into a school of social work. This new campus will accommodate approximately 830 students, faculty and staff.

Detroit-Windsor Tunnel (18)
This underwater highway connects Windsor to Detroit and is the second busiest border crossing between the United States and Canada (the adjacent Ambassador Bridge is first). The structure is jointly owned by the Cities of Detroit and Windsor. It is 1,573m in length.

Ambassador Bridge
The Ambassador Bridge (1929) is currently the busiest international border crossing in North America. The bridge is under private ownership, but the Governments of Canada, Ontario and Michigan and are in the process of planning a second bridge that will ease the traffic gridlock and long wait times at the border. (Not shown on the map.)

University of Windsor
The University of Windsor's campus lies west of downtown Windsor. This proximity has enabled its 16,000 students to easily frequent the downtown and their presence is fundamental to the revitalization process. (Not shown on map)



3



10



8

VISIBILITY

Does the Downtown have an integral role in the life of the wider city?

Windsor is Canada's southern most city, situated on the shores of the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair (with the USA to the north). Windsor is also located at the western end of the heavily populated Quebec City–Windsor Corridor, connecting some of Canada's largest metropolises to each other, as well as to Michigan and the Midwest. This strategic location contributes to Windsor being one the Canada's most crucial gateway cities. The crossing between Windsor and Detroit is said to be one of the most important in the world.

The skylines of downtown Windsor and downtown Detroit are separated by a river that is also an international border, but the two skylines appear as a single city from a distance. The connections between the two cities also go well beyond physical proximity, with the two economies linked through the automotive industry, significant cross-border labour flows and strong social and cultural ties. As major restructuring has occurred within the manufacturing sector on a global scale, both cities have been challenged to adapt and diversify their economic base, while simultaneously managing job and population losses.¹

Changing regional conditions also have a major impact on downtown Windsor. For example, Caesars Windsor experienced a significant drop in patronage due to a powerful series of macro decisions, actions and events taking place almost simultaneously. In a very short timeframe, Detroit shed almost a third of its population; massive job losses led to lower disposable incomes; the US dollar dropped to be almost on par with the Canadian dollar; new-found concerns over global terrorism led to US citizens being compelled to carry a passport when re-entering the country; and significant casino expansion occurred in Michigan and Ohio, including one in downtown Detroit (Greektown Casino, MGM Grand, and Motor City Casino). To remain competitive, Caesars Windsor has diversified its functionality and reinvested in its facilities. However, this situation illustrates the way that the fortunes of downtown Windsor are affected by the economic performance of Detroit and beyond, as well as high level international policies.

Windsor has faced many economic challenges in recent years that have affected both the downtown and the City as a whole. The City and its stakeholders should be commended on the many steps they have taken to tackle these serious challenges head on by diversifying economic opportunities and building on the City's strengths. As Windsor reimagines and rebuilds in the coming years, the downtown will play an increasingly critical role on this road to recovery.



“Downtown Windsor is only 5 minutes from downtown Detroit. In a way, if you live in Windsor you have two downtowns.”

Downtown comprises

0.7%

of total city area (105 ha)

2%

**of the population live
downtown in 2011 (4,925)**

or 47 people/ha

¹ CBC News (2013). *Could Detroit's financial woes kill annual fireworks show?* Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2013/02/25/wdr-freedom-fest-fireworks-detroit-financial-crisis.html>

VISIONARY

Does the downtown have strong leaders who collaborate to achieve a shared vision?

For the past 20 years, there has been consensus around the importance of revitalizing downtown Windsor. Indeed, several plans and studies have been launched to achieve this goal, with supporting efforts and investments made by various public and private sector stakeholders to see a stronger downtown. Yet Windsor has often been prone to economic booms and busts, which has had an impact on the momentum and resources available to propel the downtown towards a cohesive long-term vision.

Vision

Windsor's downtown has been an important planning priority for decades. As early as 1995, the City developed the landmark City Centre Revitalization Study to kick start renewal in the area. It articulated a vision for a new, successful downtown core that would be achieved through a market-driven, consumption-based resurgence. This policy provided incentives that decreased zoning restrictions in the core and promoted the establishment of nightclub and entertainment venues. Unfortunately, this plan had a series of unintended consequences, as many new bars and entertainment facilities were developed to appeal to a youthful clientele (particularly youth from the USA between the ages of 19 – 21 seeking to take advantage of the lower drinking age in Ontario), creating a new array of challenges for the downtown including increased noise, street violence, and nuisance crimes.

In response, a visionary shift occurred to reposition the downtown as a holistic, safe, and sustainable neighbourhood. The Bellmio Report, issued in 2003, highlighted a range of steps to be taken to get the downtown back on track, including revised zoning categories for bars and entertainment venues and increased emphasis on neighbourhood policing.² These ideas were also incorporated the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Area Strategic Plan 2011-2014. This allowed the downtown to emerge as a more inclusive destination with a wider range of activities.

This vision evolved one step further in the Municipal Cultural Master Plan, 2010. This Plan identified the downtown as a “focal point for investment in arts and cultural activities” and established a goal of creating a critical mass of cultural facilities downtown. This vision is starting to be realized with investments in the Capitol Theatre, the Art Gallery of Windsor and the establishment of St Clair College Centre for the Arts and plans to relocate the University of Windsor's visual arts and music programs downtown.

Leadership and Collaboration

The City has put a great deal of emphasis on strengthening the downtown in its planning policies and in a series of strategic public investments to improve facilities and quality of place downtown. The City has also shown a willingness to build partnerships with key stakeholders to encourage investment in the downtown. The City has for example supported efforts to attract institutions, new office tenants and businesses to the core.

The economic circumstances have created challenges for private sector leaders, although several business owners as well as the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Area continue to champion a resurgent downtown core.

The provincial government has also been focusing on downtown Windsor; it invested heavily in the City's casino, the new post secondary institutions downtown and the tunnel plaza. The Federal Government has also had some involvement in supporting these new facilities, as well as the new Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator Centre and they will play a key role in financing a new bridge to the USA.

Post secondary institutions, the University of Windsor and St Clair College, have also been critical champions for the downtown, working with the City to develop new post secondary campuses in the core.

² Scale Down Windsor. (2008). Retrieved from: <http://scaledownwindsor.blogspot.ca/2008/01/accepting-challenge-to-make-downtown.html>

PROSPERITY:

Is the downtown's economy robust and innovative?

Residential Development

Residential development in downtown Windsor has been limited. From 2005 to 2013, the downtown core saw less than \$2M invested in its residential stock, representing less than 1% of citywide residential investment. This new housing stock was generally the result of converting office space or upper floors of storefronts to apartments and/or condominium lofts.³ However, an exciting example of a new and larger scale condominium development can be found along the waterfront, the award-winning, professionally decorated Portofino building, although this building is not yet fully occupied.⁴ Downtown Windsor will be challenged to become more livable in order to attract a growing population base. The downtown could do this by capitalizing on housing demand from students attending the new post-secondary campuses in the downtown.

Office Development

Interviewees commented that up until the 1990s, downtown Windsor accommodated a broad range of jobs with various accounting firms, engineering firms and insurance companies, such as KPMG and London Life. However, interviewees also noted that as downtown office buildings aged and rents increased, the core became a less attractive option, resulting in many companies moving out to suburban office parks.

However, some ground has been regained. For example, in late 2012 the Sutherland Global Services call centre moved 400 employees into the company's downtown offices, joining 600 who were already there. This building (500 Ouellette) had seen a 50% vacancy level but is now 95% full.⁵ The Windsor Star newspaper is the anchor tenant in the former Palace Cinema Theatre space, which was recently renovated to provide new high quality office space downtown.

The City also helped support one of Windsor's largest downtown office developments at 1 Riverside West. The City was involved in expropriating properties to realize this building; leased part of the space to see it built and spent \$16M on building the attached parking garage, which it continues to

³ACT *Building Better Homes and Communities*. Retrieved from: http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/case-studies/ACT/Streamlining_Office-to-Residential_Conversions_CS_EN.pdf

⁴Collavino Group. Portofino building. Retrieved from: <http://www.collavinogroup.com/project-portofino.aspx>

⁵Cross, B. (2012). *400 jobs coming to downtown Windsor*. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/11/22/400-jobs-coming-to-the-downtown/>

485

**new dwellings units were built
downtown between 2006-2011**

\$1.96M in residential
construction between 2005-2013

\$156M

**in non-residential construction
(including mixed use development)
between 2005-2013**

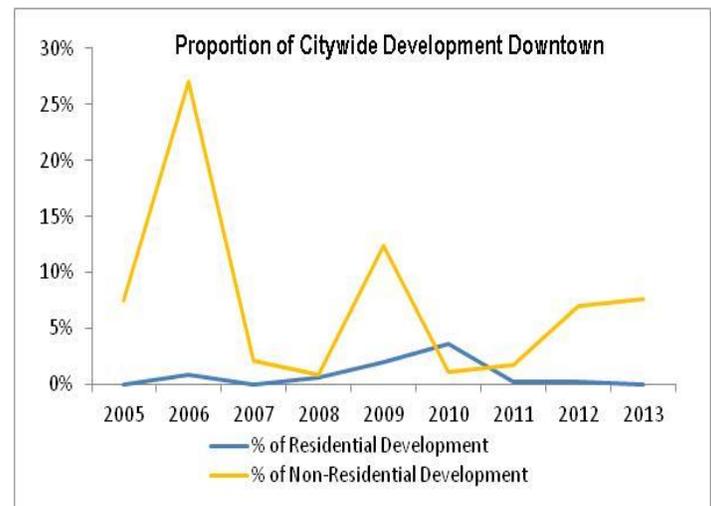
**Between 2005-2013 downtown has
attracted an average of**

6% of total

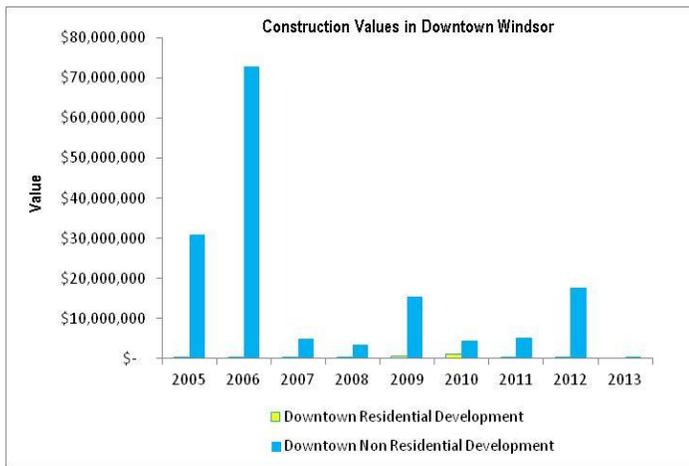
construction value

own. This type of leadership signals the City's commitment to diversifying the downtown economic base.

The City of Windsor is also working to position itself as a new high-tech hub with a unique corporate culture. In the City, from 2009 to 2011, approximately 100 jobs were created from nine tech companies, which are expected to double size in the near future.⁶ If these efforts can be sustained, the downtown will provide an excellent environment to support new technology companies in the years to come.



⁶ Ibid.



Retail Development

Retailing in downtown Windsor has been challenged by the lasting impacts of the recent financial crisis on Windsor as a whole, declining downtown visitation from the US, as well as extreme competition from suburban big box malls, particularly in Detroit. The severity of the impact of cross-border shopping for downtown retailers (and property owners) is captured in a Windsor Star article, which reports that the taxes downtown retailers paid to the City were comparable to rents paid to their landlords,⁷ creating significant challenges to retail viability.

Additionally, the City's obligation under Ontario's Municipal Act to provide owners with a property tax rebate of 30% for vacant commercial space does little to encourage reuse of vacant downtown space.⁸ The effect of this policy can be seen in storefront vacancies along some of the key retail spines.

In the coming years, it will be critical that this situation is improved by increasing downtown pedestrian traffic, growing the jobs base and attracting more residents and students. The integration of Caesars Windsor, as well as new cultural facilities and the new aquatic centre downtown will also be important. Some steps have already been taken to achieve this goal with the initiation of the DWBIA's Dine Around program, designed to attract conference delegates to downtown restaurants. The downtown Farmers Market, managed by the Downtown Residents Association has also announced its new home at Charles Clark Square by City Hall.⁹ Hopefully, all of

⁷ Schmidt, D. (2012). *Good news as Downtown Windsor BIA ordered out of current home*. Retrieved from <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/09/11/good-news-as-downtown-windsor-bia-ordered-out-of-current-home/>

⁸ City of Windsor. *Taxes and Assessment*. Retrieved from: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Taxes--and-Assessment-/Pages/Tax-Rates.aspx>

⁹ CTV News (2013). *Windsor farmers' market heads to Charles Clark Square*. Retrieved from: <http://windsor.ctvnews.ca/windsor-farmers-market-heads-to-charles-clark-square-1.1172918>

these efforts will begin to improve future opportunities for downtown retailers.

Educational & Institutional Development

St. Clair College and the University of Windsor have both been major players in working to revitalize the downtown.¹⁰ St. Clair College recently opened two campuses in the core. Its multipurpose Centre for the Arts has been established along the waterfront, accommodating 800 students, as well as the 1,200 seat Chrysler Theatre.¹¹ Additionally, the College developed MediaPlex, a campus for journalism, media and public relations students, in the heart of downtown. The MediaPlex was developed with the support of the federal government, as well as the City, which donated the former Salvation Army building.¹²

The University of Windsor, with its main campus located in close proximity to the downtown core (serving over 16,000 students)¹³ is also focused on developing several downtown campuses. The University recently acquired the former Windsor Star building to house its School of Social Work (approximately 900 students) and the Centre for Executive & Professional Education by 2014.¹⁴ The University is also accommodating the school of Fine Arts and Music programs in the former Windsor Armouries as well as converting the former Greyhound Terminal across the street into a new facility. The federal government, the provincial government and the City are helping to support these important projects. The emergence of these new post-secondary campuses is a game changer for the downtown and will bring thousands of feet to the streets; it will hopefully have many spin-off benefits for other industries in the downtown.

Tourism

Caesars Windsor Hotel and Casino is a key tourism asset downtown; it hosts major concerts and events and increases the profile of the downtown core. In the late 1990s the Casino thrived, but according to the OLG, visitation fell from 6.7 million

¹⁰ Richards, C. (2011). *City Announces Major Funding to Launch Downtown Revitalization*. Retrieved from <http://windsorite.ca/2011/05/city-announces-major-funding-to-launch-downtown-revitalization/>

¹¹ Chrysler Theater (2010). *About*. Retrieved from <http://www.chryslertheatre.com/about.htm>

¹² Media Plex. (2011). *Media Plex*. Retrieved from <http://www.stclaircollege.ca/mediaplex/>

¹³ University of Windsor. (2012). *About the University*. Retrieved from <http://www.uwindsor.ca/about-the-university>

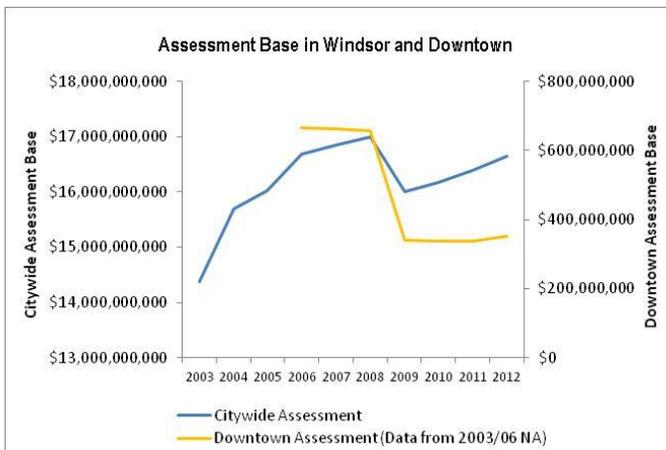
¹⁴ Battagello, D. (2012). *Windsor Star hands Keys to Ferry Street to University of Windsor*. The Windsor Star. Retrieved from <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/11/30/windsor-star-hands-keys-to-ferry-street-to-university-of-windsor/>

in 2000 to 3.6 million in 2012.¹⁵ This decline was further marked by the layoff of over 2,000 employees. In response to these challenges, a \$430-million rebranding/ expansion effort was launched in 2006. A new 27-story hotel called the Augustus Tower was developed, as well as a 5,000-seat theatre and a 100,000 square foot convention centre. The existing facility was also renovated. These efforts have been important for maintaining the strength of the Casino so it can continue to play a significant role in the community.

Downtown Windsor has also seen major improvements to its arts and cultural facilities, which should help grow visitation. In early 2013, the City bought the Art Gallery of Windsor's (AGW) building and allowed them to stay on rent-free, giving the AGW more freedom to concentrate on enhancing the collection and programming. A recent Council vote has also approved a renovation of the building to include a civic museum.¹⁶ Improvements to the Capitol Theatre will also create a new home for the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, the new festival stage and revamped riverfront plaza will accommodate community events and concerts outdoors adjacent to the Detroit River.

Municipal Tax Base

The economic difficulties faced in recent years in downtown Windsor have been reflected in a shrinking property assessment base. The downtown's assessment base lost almost half of its value between 2006 and 2012. However, the City as whole also faced a steep decline in assessment value 2009 and still has not recovered to the highs reached before the 2008 financial crisis.



Currently, the downtown comprises 2% of citywide assessment (down from 4% in 2008). It will be important that the City continues to track this number as this is an important indicator of the downtown's economic health. It will be critical for the downtown to grow its assessment base and provide the City with a stronger tax base.

Jobs

The City of Windsor has a workforce of 103,035 employees. Of these employees, most people (33,920) were employed in the manufacturing and construction sector, followed by 27,950 in the sales and service sector. However, limited data is available on jobs in the downtown study area. The Casino is one of the downtown's largest employers with 3,000 jobs in the facility. The downtown area also accommodates City Hall, as well as the headquarters of Daimler-Chrysler Canada, CBC and Sutherland Global Services. The development of the new Windsor University and St Clair College buildings is also creating short term construction jobs and long term staff and faculty jobs in the core.



Canderel Building at 1 Riverside West

¹⁵Toronto Star (2013). *Windsor's casino an important job creator as high unemployment persists*. Retrieved from: http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/02/18/windsors_casino_an_important_job_creator_as_high_unemployment_persists.html

¹⁶CBC News (2013) *Civic museum to move into Art Gallery of Windsor*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2013/04/23/wdr-windsor-civic-museum-art-gallery.html>

LIVABILITY

Is the downtown vibrant, liveable & connected?

Population

In 2011, approximately 4,925 people or 2% of the population were living in downtown Windsor. This population was living at a modest density of 24 persons per hectare. A disturbing trend for the downtown is that the population declined by 16% between 1996 and 2011. By comparison, the City of Windsor experienced population growth of nearly 7% over that same period. Between 2006 and 2011 the City did experience a 2.6% decline in population, yet this could largely be attributed to the global economic crisis that was strongly felt within the region.

Age and Diversity

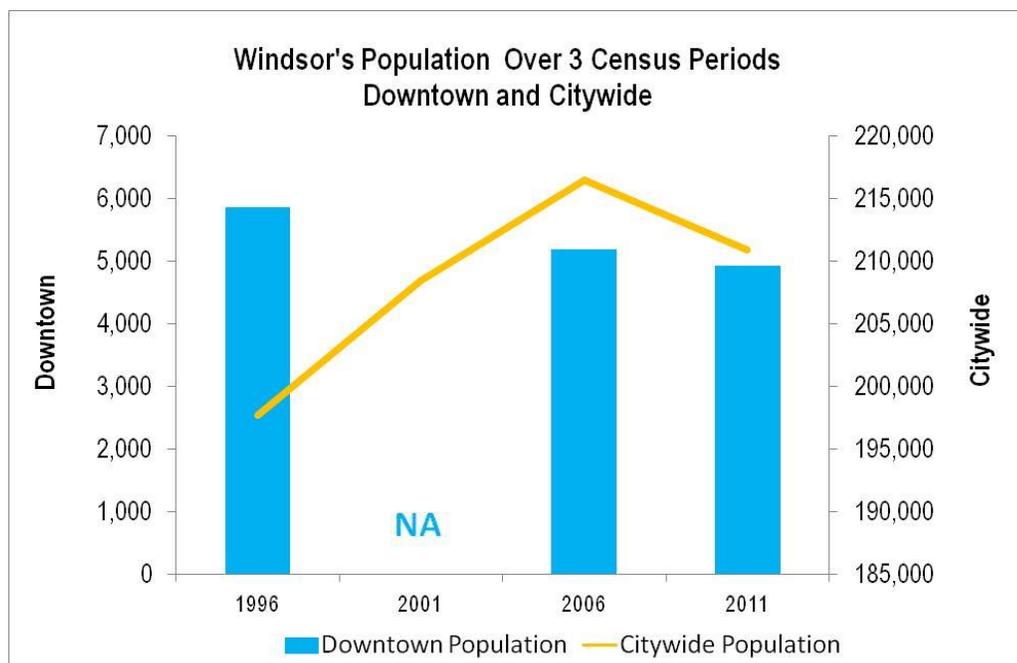
Downtown Windsor has a diverse population base. In 2006, 31% of the downtown population identified as a visible minority, compared to 21% citywide. These minorities represent a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, including: Arab (8%), Black (7%), Chinese (5%), and South Asian (4%). Downtown Windsor is also representative of an older population with an average age of 47.8 years. The City, in contrast, is composed of persons whose average age is nearly a decade younger (38.4 years). Downtown residents also earn less on average than citywide residents, with more than half the population (56%) earning less than \$20,000 per year. It is assumed that this reflects the higher rate of seniors living downtown.

Housing

Over three quarters of the downtown housing stock is made up of multi-storey apartment buildings (78%); this is in sharp contrast to the rest of the City, where over two thirds of housing stock is made up of single-detached homes. Additionally, the downtown units were largely constructed in a different era than the city as a whole. The city experienced a construction boom in the post-war era until 1960, while the downtown's construction boom occurred during in the 1970s. Increasing the demand for housing in the downtown will be important to attracting a more diverse population base.

**Downtown has
4,925 residents
in 2011**

5%
**population decline
downtown between 2006-2011,
compared to -2.6% citywide**



Safety

The City of Windsor is considered to be one of the safest cities in Canada.¹⁷ The DWBIA contributes to this record through their Clean and Safe Program and the Downtown Windsor Streetscape Initiative for Ouellette Avenue,¹⁸ two projects that have focused on developing a safe, secure and family-friendly environment. One of the challenges for downtown Windsor has been overcoming a perception of being unruly at night. Several bars opened in the late 1990s that reportedly attracted young Americans (19-21years). This helped give downtown a negative image among residents. An interim control by-law in 2003 prevented the opening of any new bars and the downtown has since been positioning itself as a more family friendly destination.

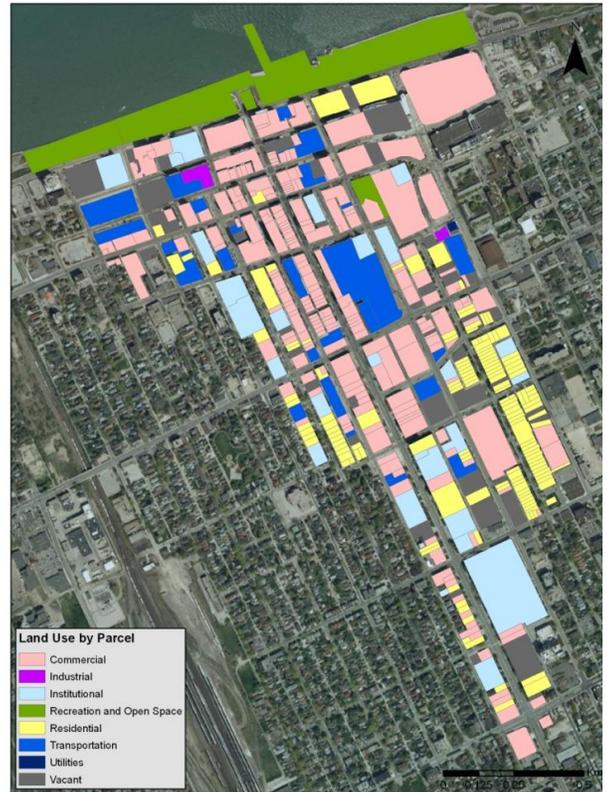
Land Uses

Commercial land uses account for a significant portion of Windsor's downtown (38%). Institutional and residential land represents an additional quarter of the downtown area (27%). Additionally, transportation uses, dominated by the Detroit-Windsor tunnel and tunnel plaza where arrivals are processed, account for one tenth of the land area. One of the downtown's key assets is its waterfront comprising 14% of land area. There is also ample opportunity for intensification in the downtown with close to 10% of land classified as vacant.

Public Realm

The nearly 5 kilometers of continuous waterfront is widely considered to be the jewel of downtown Windsor. The waterfront includes the Odette Sculpture Park, Dieppe Garden and Riverfront Festival Plaza. These waterfront spaces are critical to the life of the City and provide important spaces for outdoor recreation and play host to a range of events. The Riverfront Festival Plaza is also a popular gathering place and a frequent venue for festivals and entertainment. There has been a growing emphasis on the need to strengthen the connections between the downtown and the waterfront area, to increase the flow of visitors between these two important components of the downtown.

There has also been significant focus on upgrading downtown streets. Since 2006 the City has been working to enhance Ouellette Avenue, as well as its underground utilities. The City has also worked to upgrade Pelissier Street. These investments in partnership with the DWBIA are intended to support increased pedestrian traffic by providing customer-friendly lighting, signage, street furniture, planters, banners and sidewalk treatment. Nearby Charles Clarke Square is also programmed year round and offers a farmers market in the summer and skating rink in the winter. The DWBIA has also established a façade improvement



Commercial	38%
Institutional	14%
Recreation/Open Space	14%
Residential	13%
Transportation	11%
Vacant	10%
Industrial	0%



Downtown Windsor's uninterrupted waterfront includes a sculpture park.

¹⁷ Maclean's (2011). Canada's Most dangerous cities: the good news. Retrieved from: <http://www2.macleans.ca/tag/crime-rankings/>

¹⁸ Downtown Windsor. (2013). Programs and Services. Retrieved from: http://www.downtownwindsor.ca/programs_and_services.php

program to improve the appearance of buildings along the downtown's main streets. Council also encourages well designed side walk cafes. Collectively, these types of investments and programs have made a critical contribution to the public realm and are expected to lead to increased visitation and investment downtown.

The Downtown Windsor BIA offers free WIFI to downtown visitors. The free downtown WIFI can be accessed along most of the downtown's main streets as well as in the Windsor Bus Terminal.

Connectivity

Several interviewees commented that downtown Windsor stretches over a large area and it can often be a significant walk between clusters of activity. It was described that clusters of activity are often broken up by vacant lots, surface parking lots and/or vacant store fronts, which undermines the perception of a vital downtown core. It was also noted that some stores in the downtown remain closed on the weekends, which can create challenges for increasing visitation. Developing innovative approaches to fill these spaces and addressing issues of retail vacancies will be an important challenge for the downtown in moving forward.

Downtown Windsor is connected to surrounding neighborhoods by an efficient transit and road network. In recent years the City has looked to expand its transportation options and alternatives as more residents, students and employers are expected to move into the downtown. For example, the City upgraded the International Transit Terminal, now shared with Greyhound Canada, which features free WI-FI in the station and accommodates the Tunnel Bus with service to Detroit, along with eight other local bus routes. The downtown also benefits from quality connections via the local road network. There have been some discussions over changing various one-way streets in the core to two-way streets,¹⁹ although this idea remains controversial among downtown business owners who are concerned about changing traffic flows on their businesses.

Windsor, being a border city, also connects to the United States. More specifically, downtown Windsor is connected to downtown Detroit by the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel and to the west is the Ambassador Bridge. These two downtowns are also linked by train, bus and ferry services. Construction of the New International Trade Bridge is also expected to begin in 2013.²⁰ This new bridge will help ease the flow of border traffic, which is expected to grow from an average of 18,500 vehicles a day to 26,500 by 2025.²¹ The project is also expected to stimulate the economy and create thousands of jobs on both sides of the border.²²



Windsor Transit Terminal

¹⁹ City of Windsor (2008) *Downtown Windsor Transportation Master Plan*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/Construction/Environmental-Assessments-Master-Plans/Documents/Downtown%20Windsor%20Transportation%20Master%20Plan.pdf>

²⁰ Government of Canada (2013) *Building a New International News*. Retrieved from: <http://actionplan.gc.ca/en/initiative/building-new-international-bridge>

²¹ Oosting, J (2010) *MDOT Report: Detroit River International Crossing bridge would generate \$70.4M in first-year tolls*. Retrieved from:

http://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/index.ssf/2010/06/mdot_report_detroit_river_inte.html

²² CBC News (2013) *New Windsor-Detroit bridge gets Obama's OK*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2013/04/12/wdr-dric-presidential-permit-windsor-detroit-rick-snyder-michigan.html>

STRATEGY

Is the City Strategically Investing in Its Future?

Approach to Downtown Investments

The City of Windsor has pursued a major public investment program to revive its downtown. The City has worked closely with a wide range of partners, institutions, local businesses and other levels of government to support these efforts. It seems that the City is approaching the challenge incrementally, strategically identifying an opportunity for redevelopment and then taking the lead to kick start the project by providing incentives or creating the partnerships needed to help move the opportunity forward.

To name a few examples of this approach, the former Clearly International Centre is now the home of the new St Clair College Centre for the Arts; the former Salvation Army Building is now home to the new St Clair College Mediaplex; and the Capitol Theatre has been revived and is now home to the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Likewise, the University of Windsor will soon occupy the former Armouries building, the former Windsor Star building and the former Greyhound Bus Depot. In each case, the City has played a significant role in working with existing assets and with its local champions to redevelop the downtown.

Downtown Windsor has also seen several other projects that have been driven by provincial and federal levels of government, which will significantly strengthen the downtown. The downtown now boasts a high quality convention centre as part of the Caesars Casino expansion. As well as the new Windsor Business Accelerator Centre, to provide support to the labour market and increase innovative capabilities. The federal government also recently contributed \$35M to enhance the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. The recent approval of the (federally funded) International Trade Bridge between Windsor and Detroit, estimated to be completed by 2020, will spur economic development and ease congestion on both sides of the border.

Overall, the City is starting to see tangible results from its strategic approach to redeveloping its downtown. The combination of investments that the City has made with its partners should contribute to the ongoing strength of this resurgent downtown. The City continues along this path, and it was recently announced that the City would sell its former arena for \$1 to the Catholic School Board to house a new high school.²³

Collection of Municipal Capital Projects Data



St Clair College has built a new College of the Arts along to downtown's waterfront



St Clair College also developed the Mediaplex that houses courses in journalism, public relations, tourism, travel and media



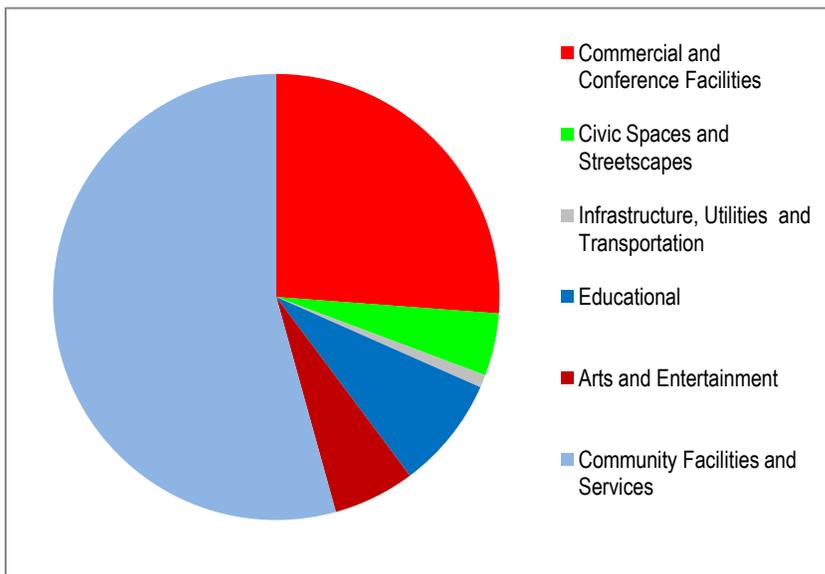
The Capitol Theatre has been renovated and is now the new permanent home of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra

²³ CBC News, 2013, Windsor Arena to be replaced by Catholic school, May 23, 2013, retrieved at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2013/05/23/wdr-windsor-arena-catholic-high-school.html>

Capital projects data for downtown Windsor was compiled with input from all City departments. Although this list was circulated and reviewed by City staff to ensure that all investments were included, the list may not be definitive.

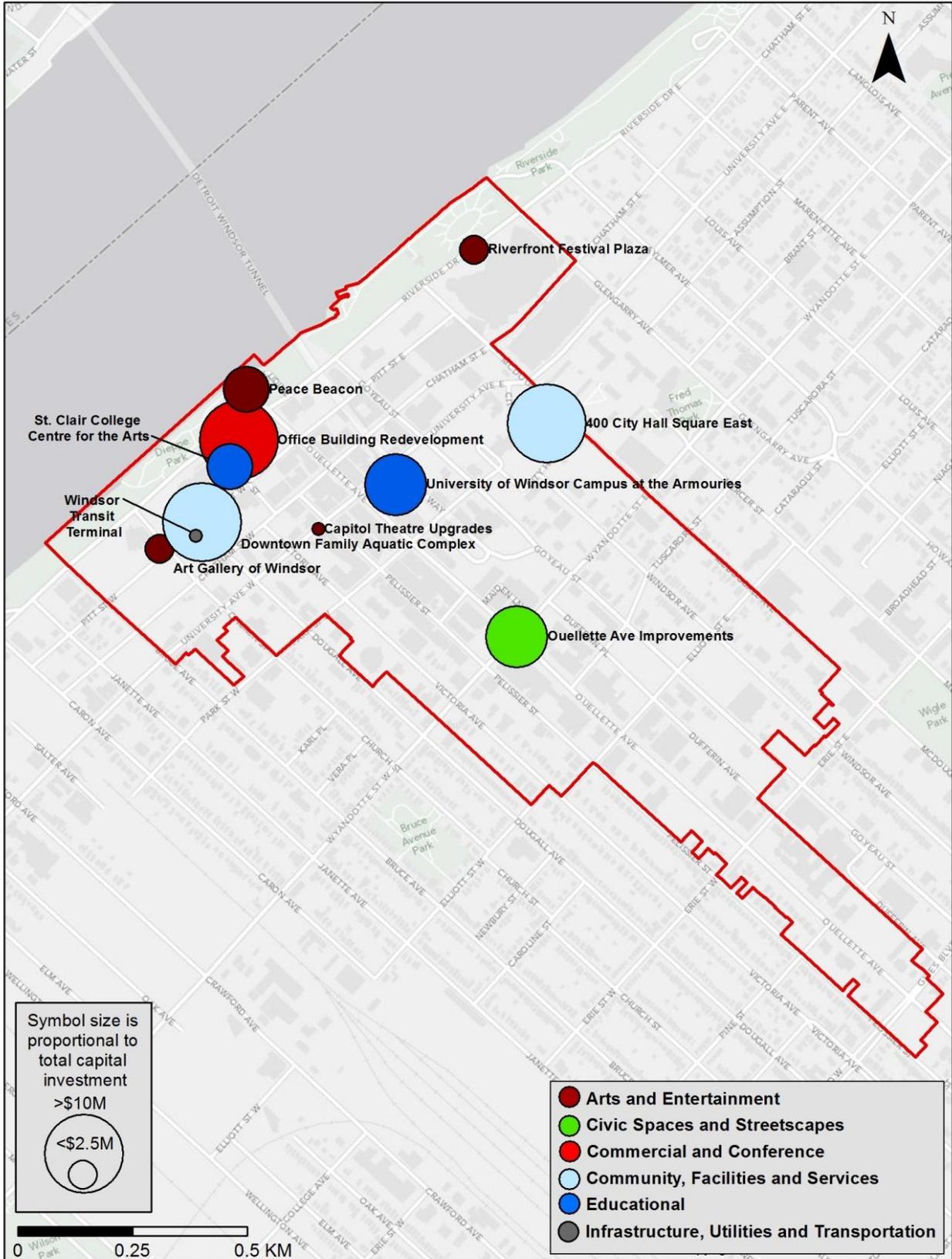
Summary of Municipal Investments

Name	Year	Municipal Investment
Office Building Redevelopment at (1 Riverside Drive)	1998-2002	\$45.6M
400 City Hall Square East	2005	\$32M
Peace Beacon	2007	\$3.2M
Windsor Transit Terminal	2007	\$1.6 M
Ouellette Ave Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvements	2010	\$7.9 M
Enhancements to Riverfront Festival Plaza	2010	\$2.5 M
Capitol Theatre Upgrades	2011	\$2 M
Establishment of St Clair College Centre for the Arts	2012	\$4.2 M
University of Windsor Campus at the Armouries	2012	\$10 M
Art Gallery of Windsor	2012	\$2.5 M
Downtown Family Aquatic Complex	2013	\$62.6 M
TOTAL		\$174.1M



This chart (left) breaks down City investments into a series of general categories. It is apparent that the City has had a strong focus on investing in community facilities and educational facilities, as well as commercial and conference facilities. These types of investments have been designed to diversify the economic, social and cultural offerings of the downtown.

Municipal Capital Projects Map



Name: Win449CapProj061213

Date: 12/06/2013

Pattern of Investment:

Diversifying the downtown's economic base

Downtown Windsor is part of a region that has been challenged to diversify its economic base so it can adapt and respond to global shifts in the economy. This broadened focus has spurred many new investments in the downtown to enhance opportunities for education, employment and other innovations.

New Post Secondary Facilities

The City has played a lead role in championing the creation of several new post-secondary facilities downtown. St Clair College has two new satellite campuses, including the MediaPlex offering Journalism, Public Relations and Tourism programs; and the new College of the Arts, which hosts Food Service Management, Community and Justice Services and Paralegal programs and serves 700 students.²⁴ Likewise, the University of Windsor is looking to establish an arts-related campus in the Armouries building, serving approximately 500 students; and move the School of Social Work to the former Windsor Star building, serving approximately 830 students, faculty and staff.²⁵ These projects will soon put thousands of new feet on the streets in downtown Windsor and increase vitality within the downtown core.

These projects are the result of strong partnerships between these institutions and the City of Windsor, as well as the provincial and federal levels of government. The City has supported these projects by contributing land and buildings; an example is the City's decision to make the former Salvation Army building available for the MediaPlex. The City has also provided financial support by contributing to renovation costs, as is the case with the Armouries. Additionally, the City contributed to the initial operating costs of the St Clair College School of the Arts along the waterfront, as the College took over operating the Chrysler Theatre. The federal and provincial governments also made substantial cash contributions to the projects.

400 City Hall Square East

In 2005, a second campus was opened across the street from Windsor's City Hall. This building (400 City Hall Square East) was developed by the City of Windsor and is now home to a number of City of Windsor services, in addition to services provided by Service Canada and Service Ontario. The construction was completed in 2005 at a cost of \$32M. This was an important project as it allowed for the consolidation of government staff, previously spread across the City.

New Office Building - 1 Riverside West

The City has worked to strengthen the downtown's economy, through its role in developing its most prestigious office building – 1 Riverside West. The City was involved in expropriating properties to realize this building, and leased part of the space to see it built. It has also spent \$16M on building the



The University of Windsor has purchased both the Armouries and the former Greyhound Terminal to develop an arts related campus



The University of Windsor will move their new school of social work into the former Windsor Star Building



The Windsor Star has moved to the former Palace Theatre, which has gone through a major renovation to be turned into a quality office space.

²⁴ St Clair College (2006) *Downtown campus soon to be a reality*. Retrieved from: <http://www.stclaircollege.ca/alumni/images/july.pdf>

²⁵ CBC News (2011) *University embarks on 'historic' downtown campus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/05/30/wdr-downtown-university.html>

attached parking garage, which it continues to own.²⁶ This project symbolizes a strong commitment from the City to diversify economic opportunities in the downtown core and provide space for companies to relocate downtown.²⁷

Accelerator Centre

To compliment these efforts, the federal government is contributing to an economically robust downtown through its lead in developing the Accelerator Centre. This Centre brings together businesses and local post-secondary institutions to create a “software technology alliance.” The goal is to attract and mentor IT entrepreneurs and share resources for business development.²⁸

Expanding entertainment and cultural offerings to attract a wider range of visitors

Visitation to downtown Windsor suffered significantly, in line with falling visitation to the Casino. This again underscores the importance of a diverse economic base and the need to develop a range of facilities and services that can attract a wide range of visitors to the downtown. As a result, many capital investments have been made in a bid to improve the range and quality of downtown facilities. This is expected to increase the number of visitors to the core in the years ahead.

Ceasars Windsor, Casino and Hotel

Ceasars Windsor is benefiting from a \$430-million, rebranding and expansion project, funded by the Province. Between 2006 and 2008, the 27-story Augustus Tower hotel was developed, as well as a 5,000-seat theatre and a 100,000 square foot convention centre. The existing Casino facility was also renovated. These efforts have been important for maintaining the strength of the Casino so it can continue to play a significant role in the community and attract a growing number of visitors. It will also be important to grow programs that aim to encourage Casino visitors to explore the wider offerings of downtown Windsor.



The Casino has been converted into a multi-purpose convention centre



The new aquatic centre will be a major new facility for the downtown

Family Aquatic Complex

One of the most significant City-led investments downtown is the new Family Aquatic Complex. This project also received a \$15 million contribution from the province. Once built, the facility will include a Sports Hall of Fame, a competitive pool and a family water park, which will be the largest indoor water park in North America. The competitive pool is set to be completed for the 2013 International Children's Games. This new facility will likely prove to be an exciting new asset for the downtown that will attract a wide range of visitors across the region.

Streetscape Improvements

Approximately \$8 million has been invested into streetscape improvements along Ouellette Avenue, and some surrounding downtown streets. This has allowed the downtown area to have a more attractive public realm that is capable of attracting more visitors and encourages walkability. The Downtown Windsor BIA has played a critical role in helping to financially support this project, contributing approximately 30% of the project costs. The Downtown BIA has also invested in free public WIFI downtown, allowing people to navigate the area and encouraging them to spend more time in the downtown.

²⁶ Windsor Star (2011). *Chrysler building hits the market*. Retrieved from: <http://www2.canada.com/windsorstar/news/story.html?id=ad1e13db-3d3d-4ffd-8517-a7cb5cca0196&p=1>

²⁷ Hall, D. (2012). *Law firm moves to Chrysler building*. Accessed from: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/11/22/law-firm-moves-to-chrysler-building/>

²⁸ Zacharilla, L. (2011). *Intelligent Community Forum Announces Top Seven Intelligent Communities of 2011*. Retrieved from: <http://www.intelligentcommunity.org/index.php?src=news&refno=582&category=Partner+News&prid=582>

Waterfront Improvements

The City has a strong commitment to enhancing its waterfront. As part of a 25 year project that commenced in 2000, approximately \$65 million will be contributed to waterfront redevelopment through municipal, provincial, federal as well as private sector sponsorship.²⁹ This investment will significantly bolster the downtown's waterfront revitalization efforts. Major renovations were carried out in 2013 to build the stage complex at the Riverfront Festival Plaza.

New Transit Terminal

To allow for a better experience and improved access downtown, the City has invested in the Windsor International Transit Terminal. This multi-modal facility shared by Transit Windsor and Greyhound Canada was renovated to house nine bus routes in Windsor, as well as serving as an important link for local and long-distance Greyhound routes. The new Terminal features free WIFI in the station, and is a fully accessible building.

Upgrades to the Capitol Theatre

The City has also been focused on arts and cultural facilities in the downtown. The City took the lead in saving the Capitol Theatre after it declared bankruptcy, and worked towards refurbishing the building. The Capitol Theatre is now the permanent home of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and is a designated Heritage Site.³⁰

Art Gallery of Windsor

For many years the Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW) was moved between a number of different buildings across the City. However, in 1999 plans for the new AGW were unveiled, and by 2012 a new modernist building had been developed along the waterfront. This project was funded with support from provincial and federal governments. The City is considering investing \$3M to renovate the first floor of the AGW so it can accommodate a civic museum and strengthen the role of this building as an arts and cultural hub.³¹ Discussions in the past have also revolved around the potential for this building to accommodate the downtown library branch, although at time of writing these plans were on hold.³² Overall, the AGW remains a critical arts and cultural asset for downtown Windsor, and as its uses and functionality expands its role will continue to grow within the community. The policy of offering free admission means the AGW can help to expand the cultural learning for all residents of Windsor.



The new Art Gallery of Windsor will also soon house a new civic museum, this is a major cultural asset for the city, and received \$2.5M in City funding.

Overall, the City of Windsor has pursued and championed an aggressive downtown revitalization program. It is now starting to see these projects and these investments paying off with new galleries, theatres, museums, convention centres and the aquatic centre. These types of projects will support the broader aim of diversifying the economic base of both downtown and the City as a whole, which should help to bring many more people to the downtown core and grow the strength and vitality of the downtown over time. It will be important to follow these investments to fully understand the ways that these new projects are working to shape and revitalize the downtown core.

²⁹ City of Windsor. (2000). *Central Riverfront Implementation Plan*. Retrieved from: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/central-riverfront-implementation-plan/documents/crip-complete.pdf>

³⁰ City of Windsor. *The Capitol Theatre*. Retrieved from: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/culture/pages/the-capitol-theatre.aspx>

³¹ CBC News (2013). Civic museum to move into Art Gallery of Windsor. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2013/04/23/wdr-windsor-civic-museum-art-gallery.html>

³²CTV News (2013). *Museum to move into Art Gallery of Windsor*. Retrieved from: <http://windsor.ctvnews.ca/museum-to-move-into-art-gallery-of-windsor-1.1250658>

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Image List

Cover Page

- Large Image: Courtesy Greg Atkinson
- Postcard Fountain: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/05/17/peace-fountain/>
- Greetings Windsor: <http://thumbs1.ebaystatic.com/d/l225/m/mnNfVAN1QGIW35HNwsUmwjw.jpg>

Downtown Timeline

- Duff Baby House: [http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/OHT---Content/Conservation/Buildings/More-buildings/Duff-Baby-House-\(Windsor\).aspx](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/OHT---Content/Conservation/Buildings/More-buildings/Duff-Baby-House-(Windsor).aspx)
- Underground railroad monument: <http://www.soulofamerica.com/windsor-guide.phtml>
- MediaPlex: <http://dconl.com/article/id38663/buildingenvelope>
- Armouries rendering: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/mayorandcouncil/Pages/Downtown-Transformation.aspx>
- Ambassador Bridge: <http://pulldigital-clients.s3.amazonaws.com/Pull-Digital/Demos/Full-Width-Cycle/index.html>
- Odette Park runners: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/law/news/riverfront-run-gets-volunteers-springing-into-action>
- Sandwichtown placard: <http://mix967.ca/>

- Caesars: http://images.askmen.com/fine_living/hotel/caesars-windsor_1.jpg

Context Map:

- Caesars: <http://www.stonecroftinn.com/area-attractions.html>
- Detroit-Windsor Tunnel: <http://swoda.uwindsor.ca/swoda/content/125>
- Festival Plaza/Civic Terrace: <http://www.windsorstar.com/PHOTOS+They+them+Windsor+Ribfest/7113284/story.html>
- Art Gallery of Windsor: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2013/04/16/council-to-tackle-long-standing-museum-question/>
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- City Hall: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Windsor_city_hall.JPG
- Jackson Park: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/parksandforestry/City-Parks/Pages/Jackson-Park-.aspx>
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- Ouellette St: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/11/30/windsor-city-of-a-million-lights/>
- Dieppe Garden: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/parksandforestry/City-Parks/Pages/Dieppe-Gardens-.aspx>
- Windsor Transit Terminal: <http://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/transitwindsor/Ride-Guide/Pages/Transit-Terminals.aspx>

Prosperity

- 1 Riverside West: Courtesy Greg Atkinson

Livability

- Windsor skyline: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Windsor_Ontario_skyline.jpg
- Waterfront: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2012/08/10/no-new-waterfront-buildings-mayor/>
- Transit Terminal: Courtesy Greg Atkinson

Strategy

- St Clair College of the Arts: http://ofwindsor.net/index.php?title=File:Windsor_Waterfront_St_Clair_Centre_for_the_Arts_Hilton_DSC_1095.jpg
- St Clair College Mediaplex: <http://www.doorsopenwindsor.com/sites/30/>
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- Armouries: <http://www.uwindsor.ca/dailynews/2012-11-19/city-approval-another-milestone-on-road-toward-downtown-campus>
- Windsor Star building: Courtesy Greg Atkinson
- Palace Theatre <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/2011/11/26/windsor-star-to-launch-community-newsroom/>
- Casino Windsor: <http://w-g-r.blogspot.ca/2013/04/wgr-refocus-and-top-games-of-all-time.html>
- Aquatic Centre: <http://www.breakingnews.ca/2012/07/20/my-menu/windsor/aquatic-centre-construction-back-on-track/>
- Art Gallery: Courtesy Greg Atkinson