

DOWN TOWN WINDSOR

2020 DWBIA
YEAR IN REVIEW

THE DOWNTOWN WINDSOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (DWBIA)

has made it its mandate to undertake and maintain strategic planning necessary to address key issues, and is committed to overseeing safety and security initiatives within the area. Further, and of utmost importance, the **DWBIA** advocates on behalf of the interests of the business owners, commercial property owners and tenants within the business district.

2020 proved to be a most challenging -- and yet, remarkably transformational -- year, not only for the **DWBIA**, but for the 680+ members it supports. What resulted was a collection of herculean efforts from the **DWBIA's** Board of Directors, staff and membership to survive and thrive in a year that threatened to disrupt and destroy. Thanks to the collective efforts of all involved, the **DWBIA** was successful in advocating for and uplifting its membership through a myriad of one-of-a-kind programs and offerings, not only carrying out its mandate in the midst of a pandemic, but also remaining a pillar of strength and support for all of its members.

EVOLUTION

In 2020, the **DWBIA** invested nearly \$700,000 in the local economy. The onset of the pandemic required that its mandate -- to engage and advocate for its membership, develop and encourage new business, retain business, recruit and expand, find innovative ways to market itself, and to continue to beautify the area and keep it safe -- be completed as expected, but this year called upon the increased creativity, passion and resilience of the **DWBIA's** Board, team, and its entire membership.

AND SO, THIS YEAR WE RESPONDED TO THE CALL TO EVOLVE, TO TRANSFORM AND TO RISE.

With the added challenges of supporting our membership through a most tumultuous and nerve-wracking year, both for business and life as a whole, the pandemic caused us to rethink our traditional models and processes. We needed to come up with creative, safe and inventive programs that highlighted local business and maintained interest in the core.

Despite the chaos of the year, we're proud to have successfully executed several warmly-received programs, events and initiatives. **They include, but are not limited to:**

- Six weekend street closures
- Downtown Arts Fair
- Ouellette Car Cruise
- Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market (both regular season and winter)
- Winter Fest
- Crowdfunding initiative for its members in response to COVID-19
- Business incentive program
- Farmers' Market e-commerce platform
- A new website
- Members' events listings
- Social media resource guide
- Tech Talks webinar series
- Video vignette series featuring member businesses
- COVID-19 resource guides and support kits
- Decorative lighting
- Parklets and patios
- Seasonal advertising
- Lobbying and advocacy

We were also awarded numerous grants this year to support our pandemic response and several other projects and initiatives, and were honoured with the Windsor Essex County Health Unit's Organizational Social Responsibility Award, thanks to our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of our community during the pandemic.

ONWARD & UPWARD

The **DWBIA** understands the value of remaining progressive and deliberate in keeping up with technology, as well as supporting those small businesses in need of digital education and maintenance.

This year, we launched a fresh, brand new website **downtownwindsor.ca**, where visitors can find information about dining, professional services, retail and hospitality within the core. It is also a space where members can communicate with the **DWBIA**, have their events posted, and collect pertinent information, such as COVID-safety toolkits and literature.

We also launched the **Tech Talk** webinar series, through which we assisted businesses with learning about website development, social media engagement, graphic design and marketing.

At the end of the year, we produced our most digitally-focused event yet, our **2020 Winter Fest** -- we utilized all of our digital platforms to transform our holiday programming from more traditional, in-person holiday season events to a safe, socially-distanced and digitally-focused Winter Fest. This was to help small businesses in the core usher in a new era in how they marketed their businesses, despite a raging pandemic, and welcome traffic into their doors -- even if only virtually.

Some of the programming for Winter Fest included:

- Letters to Santa
- Holiday window displays
- Holiday Village and Santa on the Lane
- 12 Days of Christmas virtual programming featuring Songs of the Season, Santa in the City and more
- House to House Combat: Battle of the Gingerbreads
- Shop Downtown Windsor 2 Win
- Music from the rooftops
- Virtual Santa Meet and Greets
- Ultimate #ShopLocal gift basket campaign
- Video vignette series featuring Cooking & Cocktails with Claus, Holiday Arts & Crafts
- Lighting displays



ABOVE ALL, HEALTH & SAFETY

Just as it had been around the globe, health and safety has been top-of-mind for the **DWBIA** this year, given the requirements of pandemic safety. We provided numerous reopening resources, including, but not limited to:

- Reopen and Reconnect Kits (free packages containing resource material, window and floor decals, masks and sanitizers)
- Roadmap to Recovery
- COVID-19 Toolkit for Small Business to Safely Reopen
- Various literature on best practices written specifically for hospitality providers and restaurants

Beyond this, ensuring the safety of those who live, work and visit the downtown core is of paramount importance to the **DWBIA**. To that end, the **DWBIA** has continued to provide the following:

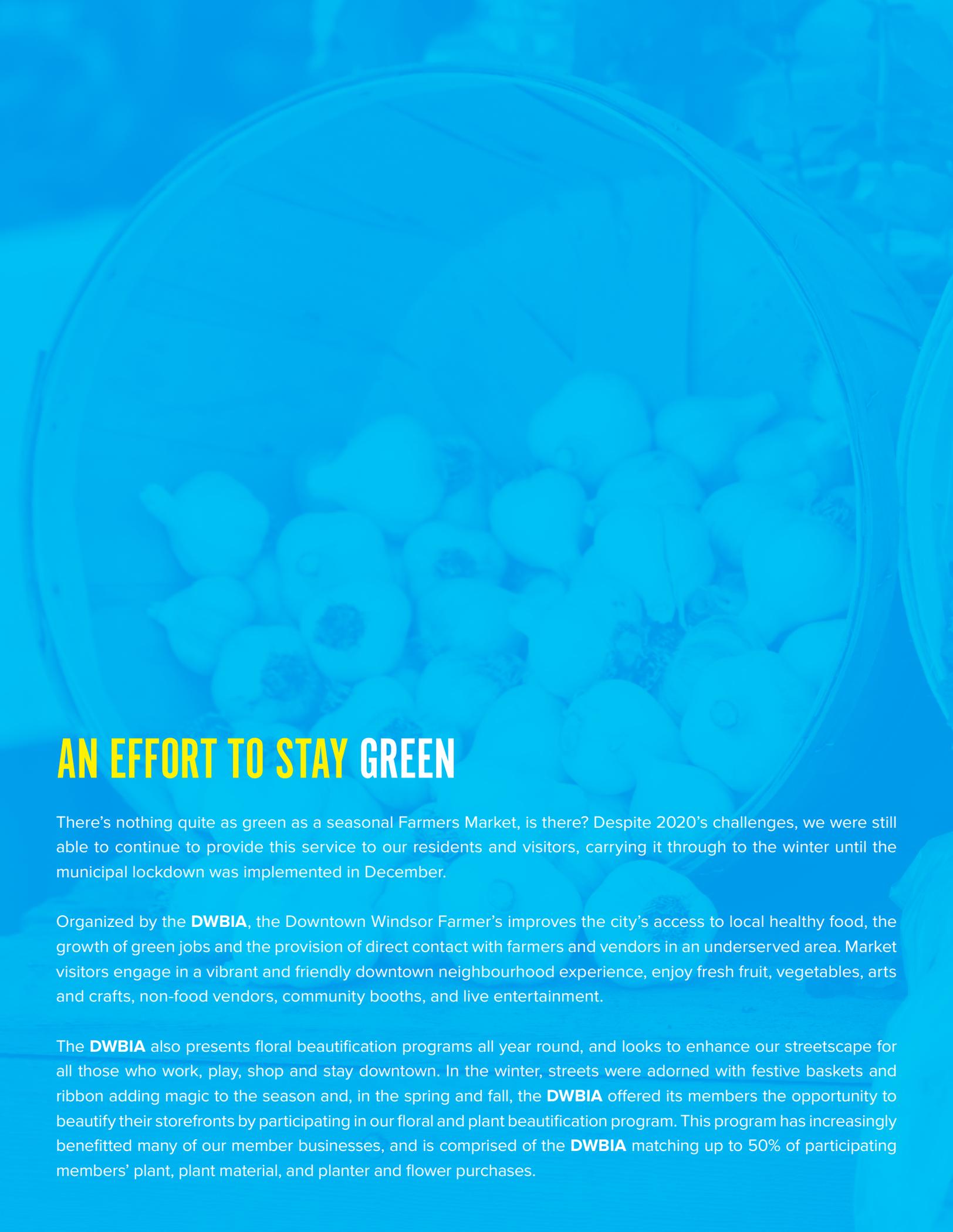
- funding for a needle collection program
- monthly municipal lighting boundary checks
- daily sidewalk cleaning
- alleyway cleaning and lighting
- seasonal power washing of sidewalks
- removal of snow from sidewalks after significant accumulation

PARKLETS & PATIOS

This year, despite being significantly affected by the pandemic, eight downtown Windsor establishments were able to continue serving their customers through an innovative patio-style format, known as a parklet.

Panache Restaurant and Lounge, La Guardia Italian Cuisine and **On a Roll Sushi** were the first to be able to utilize a walled-off patio-style seating area, creating more space for open-air dining and patron seating in general. They were quickly followed by **Craft Heads Brewing Co, Terra Cotta Pizzeria, Queen Ashtar Restaurant, Villains Beastro and Sidebar Lounge**. It was an innovation well received by not only the businesses, but their patrons as well.





AN EFFORT TO STAY GREEN

There's nothing quite as green as a seasonal Farmers Market, is there? Despite 2020's challenges, we were still able to continue to provide this service to our residents and visitors, carrying it through to the winter until the municipal lockdown was implemented in December.

Organized by the **DWBIA**, the Downtown Windsor Farmer's improves the city's access to local healthy food, the growth of green jobs and the provision of direct contact with farmers and vendors in an underserved area. Market visitors engage in a vibrant and friendly downtown neighbourhood experience, enjoy fresh fruit, vegetables, arts and crafts, non-food vendors, community booths, and live entertainment.

The **DWBIA** also presents floral beautification programs all year round, and looks to enhance our streetscape for all those who work, play, shop and stay downtown. In the winter, streets were adorned with festive baskets and ribbon adding magic to the season and, in the spring and fall, the **DWBIA** offered its members the opportunity to beautify their storefronts by participating in our floral and plant beautification program. This program has increasingly benefitted many of our member businesses, and is comprised of the **DWBIA** matching up to 50% of participating members' plant, plant material, and planter and flower purchases.

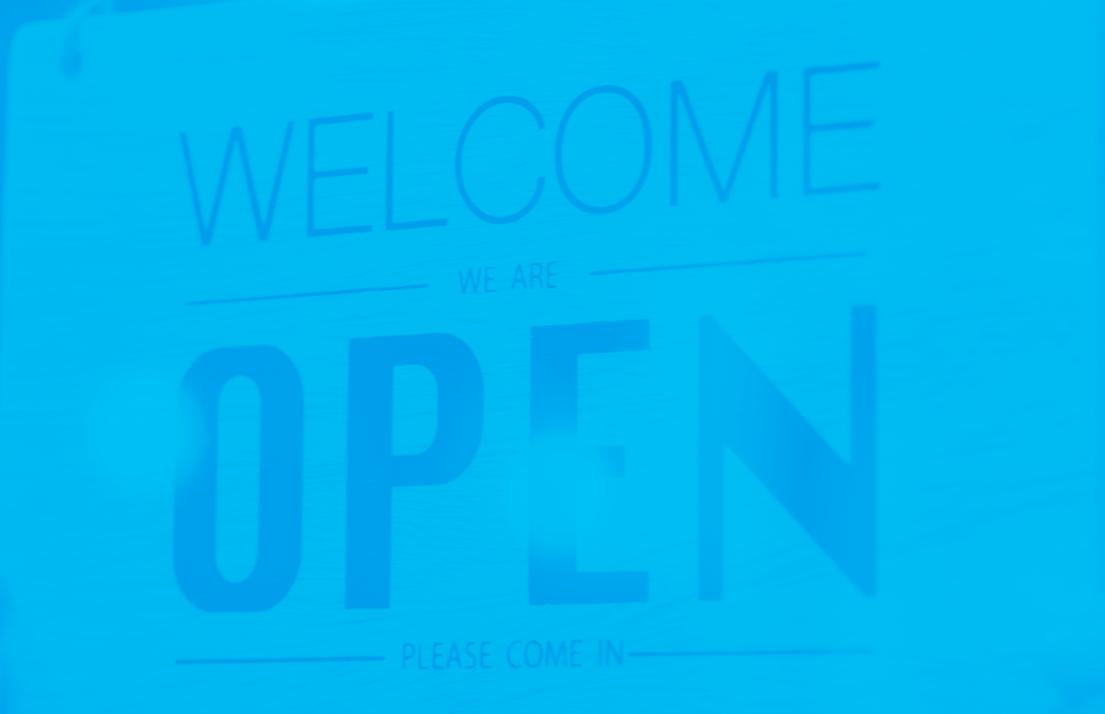
ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

Regular activities of the **DWBIA**, regardless of season or circumstance, included lobbying the municipal and provincial governments, stakeholders, the Ontario Business Improvement Areas Association and others in an effort to advocate for its membership.

This year, that included lobbying both levels of government to amend COVID-19 restrictions, which the **DWBIA** felt supported big-box brick and mortar, and did little to support small, independently owned businesses. It did so by launching a petition signed by over 13,500 people, and approached the leaders of municipal and provincial government with its arguments.

Further to that, it also lobbied for street closures, which creatively invites traffic into the core, waiving patio fees, and adding parklets.

The **DWBIA** continues to be relentless in its mission to play a leadership role in areas of advocacy and promotion of Windsor's downtown, existing to adequately and energetically represent member interests in an effort to develop, grow and maintain the social and economic spirit of the core.



WELCOME
WE ARE
OPEN
PLEASE COME IN



TO MARKET

Marketing and advertising initiatives are a constant part of the **DWBIA** playbook. Every year, new ideas are brought forth and executed intended to support our member business, like seasonal cooperative advertising; the Shop, Play, Dine and Stay video vignette series; the comprehensive daily social media strategy designed to promote member businesses and the plethora of events and activities taking place in the core. We also created the Social Media Resource Guide, which was designed to walk members through the navigation of various social media platforms. Members' listings are always available on the website, and e-blasts are regularly created and promoted in an effort to share pertinent and timely information.

THE HEART OF THE CITY: THE DWBIA

We are proud of our accomplishments this year and the many programs, projects and services we've afforded our members and the community at large. Especially noteworthy is the fact that we were financially rigorous and will end the year within budget.

All things considered, 2020 still proved to be an exceptional year, as our Board supported our membership with numerous innovative ideas that were designed to bring attention to the core and highlight its uniqueness and all of its possibilities. We will continue to advocate for our resilient and magnificent membership in 2021.