




2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**DOWN
TOWN**
WINNIPEG BIZ



Our downtown is on Treaty No. 1
Territory and the traditional homeland
of the Métis Nation.

We're here for downtown.

Unparalleled. Like no other. Unprecedented. Whatever word you prefer, this year has definitely been different. It's thrown us challenges, it's changed the rules, and it's influenced our behaviour and our wardrobes.

It has also taught us to listen and to be adaptable. It reminded us about the importance of washing our hands and helping our neighbours.

Throughout 2020, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has continued to provide support and value to the downtown community through advocacy, outreach, safety, maintenance, beautification, and promotion.

We assure our Downtown Winnipeg BIZ members, as challenges come your way, we will be right behind you.

We've got your back.

Mission

We promote, care and advocate for a vibrant and inclusive downtown where business thrives and people are drawn to work, live, shop and explore.

Message from the Chair and CEO

2020 was not what we expected.

The world and the rules are changing. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has approached each of these challenges by asking, “How can we help?” Our team has worked hard to become a trusted source for information and support and we are grateful to the staff for being there for members and each other through such a challenging year. Everyone on the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ team cares about our community and together we listened, adapted and found a renewed sense of purpose to help.

We’ve watched as our member businesses have innovated to reach customers and provide services. Businesses large and small have shown visitors that when they come downtown, they can enjoy a safe experience. We are proud of all of these efforts and inspired by the entrepreneurial spirit and determination.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that it’s not just a health crisis, but an economic one. While the health of our community remains top priority, we know our community cannot fully recover unless businesses recover. As a way to help, we launched our first grant program in August. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ micro-grant program helped 51 small- and medium-sized businesses pay for things like rent, wages, PPE, repairs, promotions and other expenses.

This year also marked a transition for our safety and outreach teams with the launch of the Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP). This new organization builds on the successful Watch and CHAT programs started at the BIZ and will enhance downtown outreach with a greater presence of highly trained teams focused on proactive prevention and non-emergency response. We are excited as the DCSP expands services to offer 24/7 support and continues the work to create a safe and healthy environment for community members experiencing complex issues.

“We strongly believe the momentum is still here.”

It is collaborations and partnerships like the DCSP that will help move our downtown forward. Our downtown can only be successful when business, arts, culture and community all work together to create a vibrant and healthy neighbourhood.

Our downtown has seen strong momentum in recent years and while we had to hit pause in 2020, recalibrate and shift our plans, we strongly believe the momentum is still here. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ staff and Board share a passion for downtown and we are eager to feel the energy of the bustling neighbourhood once again. As we look ahead, we celebrate the diversity of our downtown and commit to finding new ways to create a vibrant community where everyone feels welcome.



D Haus

Dawn Haus
Chair



Kate Fenske

Kate Fenske
CEO

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Highlights

Making Progress

Aligned with our mission, our strategic plan helps guide our work and allows us to measure our progress. Our 2020-2022 strategic plan served as an anchor through the unexpected. We knew we had to pivot our plans but the strategy remained the same, and our goals are just as important as when we first identified them late last year.

As you read through this report, you can follow along with us while we highlight our achievements as they align with our 2020-2022 goals:



Member Service and Value

Downtown Winnipeg BIZ members are diverse in terms of geography, business type and size; these diverse businesses directly fund our activities. We must understand their priorities, and deliver value on their investment.



Enhance Downtown

Tens of thousands of people come downtown every day. We want them to stay longer, enjoy more of what downtown has to offer, spend more with our member businesses – and bring their friends and family.



Advocacy and Influence

Downtown businesses are critical to Winnipeg's economy. A strong downtown generates economic and social benefits for our entire city. We want members and partners to view us as a proactive and effective advocate for downtown.



Organizational Alignment

To successfully execute our plans on behalf of members, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ must have a strong team, with the capacity and alignment to deliver.



Livin' on the veg

Han-gry
(har-gree, adj.)

1. A state of irrational anger or irritability caused by lack of food.
2. Hunger using a negative characterization of the state. 3. Hunger and

DRINK! SODA

WAKE THE FOLK UP AND DANCE

WINNIPEG

The pandemic: past, present and future

Let's imagine life as it was for a moment.

It was early 2020. It was a new year, we had a brand new strategic plan, and our budget, plans and initiatives were ready to go.

Then March came. Just like the rest of the world when the pandemic hit, we needed a new plan.

First and foremost, supporting Downtown Winnipeg BIZ members is our priority, and that required us to understand more about their needs.



Member Service and Value

- We identified early on that communication was key. As information was being released, we shared news relevant to members, sometimes daily. In the first three months, we sent **more than 20 e-newsletters** with helpful resources to our member businesses.
- To date, we've collected data from **six COVID-19 surveys** sent to member businesses, to better understand their needs, challenges and priorities, so we can align and focus our work where it's most needed.
- Once businesses started to open again, we knew they needed a way to indicate space for physical distancing. To show we're all in this together, we created door signage and floor decals for our members. To date, we've provided **more than 1,000 decals** to downtown businesses.
- To further support small- and medium-sized downtown businesses, we launched our first grant program. We granted **\$1,000 each to 51 qualifying businesses** to help with rent, wages, PPE, repairs, advertising, and other business expenses.



Enhance Downtown

- We heard from members that establishing trust with their customers was a priority. In August, we launched our **#OpenwithCare campaign**, providing PPE and digital assets to downtown businesses to help them demonstrate their commitment to following health and safety protocols.
- To help stop the spread, we ramped up our cleaning efforts of high-use spaces like bus shelters, indoor walkways and cigarette butt receptacles.



Advocacy and Influence

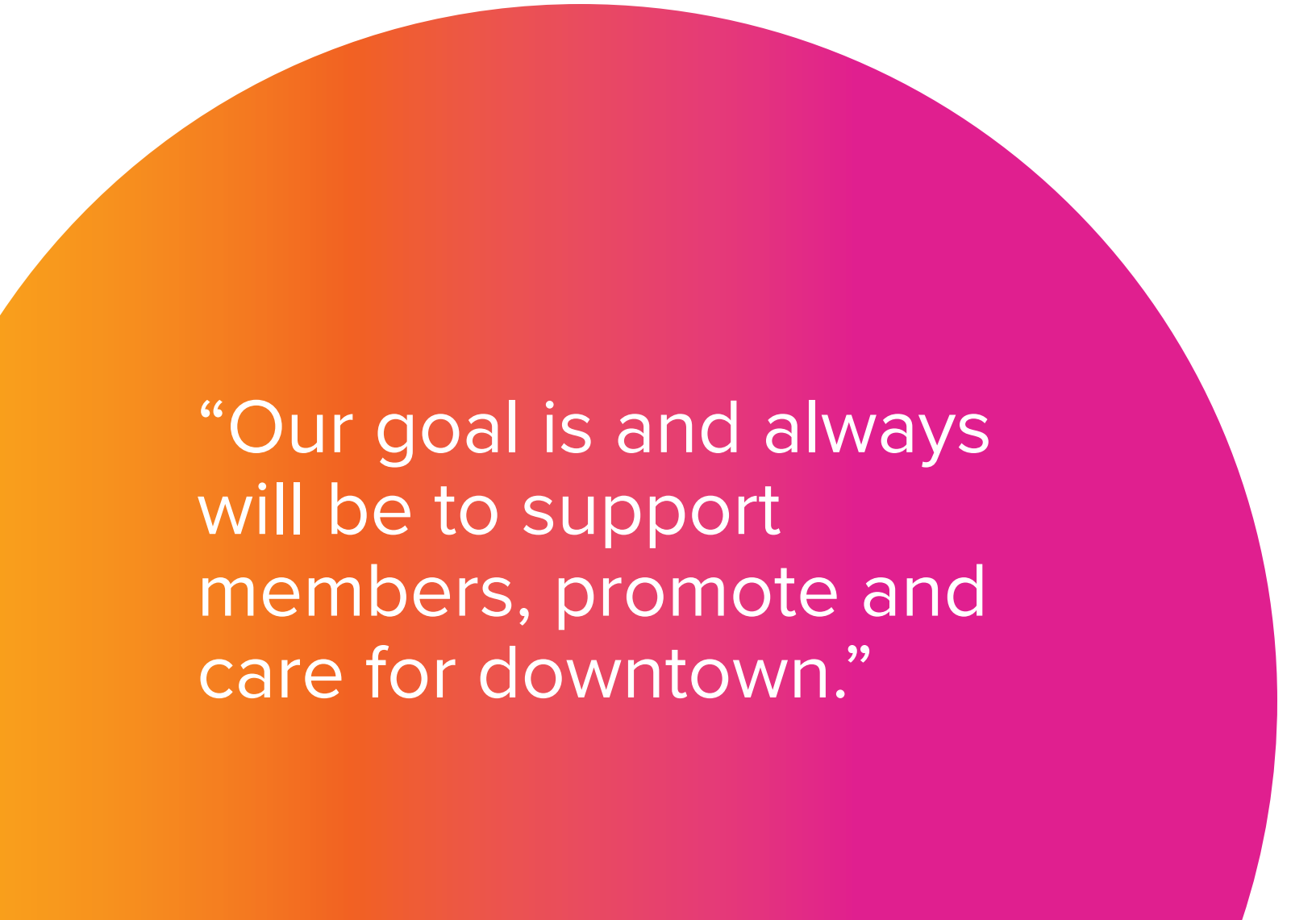
- The government launched the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program (CECRA) to help with rent relief. Early on, we heard from BIZ members that while they needed the help, they didn't qualify because of restricted criteria.
 - In August, we advocated for changing the CECRA program criteria to allow tenants to apply directly, instead of relying on landlords to participate. We also asked for a reduction in the threshold of loss, which would allow more businesses to benefit from the program.
 - In October, the government announced a new program with new criteria. The new program allows tenants to apply for CECRA directly, providing a top-up Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and changes the drop in revenue requirement to instead subsidize a percentage of business expenses on a sliding scale.
- Through the summer and fall, we worked with large employers to contribute to the discussion about how downtown workers could return to the office safely, and shared resources to help them do so. According to a survey conducted by Probe Research*, **55% of workers** returned to the office either part time or full time by mid-September. We know these numbers have likely shifted. We are committed to working with employers to help bring workers back downtown when it is safe to do so.

*Survey conducted Sept. 8-17, 2020

Navigating the future together

While it's impossible to predict what the future holds, especially through the pandemic, our goal is and always will be to support members, promote and care for downtown.

We will continue to keep our members updated as changes happen and are committed to focusing our efforts where they need it most.



“Our goal is and always will be to support members, promote and care for downtown.”



DCSP

Downtown Community
Safety Partnership

A safer downtown for everyone

Downtown safety remains a top priority for Downtown Winnipeg BIZ members, citizens and the city's most vulnerable. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ safety and outreach teams have played a crucial role in making downtown safer, more inclusive and more welcoming.

This year marked a transition for our safety and outreach teams with the launch of the Downtown Community Safety Partnership. As a key partner, we are closely connected to the DCSP, now operating in the Air Canada Building at 355 Portage Ave.

The DCSP is a new organization founded by the Province of Manitoba, City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Winnipeg Police Service, True North Sports & Entertainment, and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. The DCSP will enhance downtown outreach with a greater presence of highly trained teams.

The transition of our teams marks another shift – our Host Ambassadors are now called Downtown Ambassadors, visible by their distinct orange uniforms. We are adding more staff to the team that will continue to connect and provide on-the-street customer service and support for all downtown businesses and members of the public by answering questions, promoting the businesses we serve and offering information about Downtown Winnipeg BIZ programs and services. They also provide downtown courtesy walks.

The teams:

Connect, formerly called Watch, will continue their work providing a visible presence that fosters a safe and inclusive downtown.



Enhance Downtown

- **2231*** calls (or an average of **279 calls per month***) to Watch Ambassadors for service.
- **361*** well-being checks provided by Downtown Ambassadors.



Member Service and Value

- **134 Courtesy Walks*** provided
- **Daily visits** to the Millennium Library parkade to ensure a visual presence and act on any safety concerns.

*Reporting period from January 2020-August 2020

COAR, formerly called CHAT, connects Winnipeg's most vulnerable citizens with vital resources that help ensure their safety and well-being. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, our team was able to continue providing full-time frontline services and consistent support.



Enhance Downtown

- **7,586*** wellness checks provided by CHAT members.
- Collaborating with Salvation Army, CHAT helped conduct **daily wellness checks** and provide COVID-19 education, art kits, magazines and hygiene kits to people in need.
- **CHAT services were extended** to include Saturdays and statutory holidays as of January 8, 2020.

*Reporting period from January 2020-August 2020

Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP)

The DCSP is a community partnership focused on improving health, well-being and safety in downtown Winnipeg. It's designed to proactively address community needs and includes enhanced service that builds on our past successes. The DCSP provides an expanded community-centered outreach presence that connects individuals with the right resources and support at the right time.

Now that the teams are operating with the DCSP, here's what's changed:

- This new partnership will include 24/7 service and build on the same programs you know and trust. This extended service is expected to start in 2021.
- The teams have new uniforms, providing a consistent and approachable presence downtown.

Here's what's stayed the same:

- Both teams will continue to provide the essential safety and outreach services the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has built over the last 30 years.
- The DCSP model will continue to develop based on collaboration, research, evaluation and deliver data-driven results.
- All DCSP team members will have specialized training and continue to work with other downtown outreach agencies.
- If there's a safety concern or need, you can continue to call 204-958-7233.





Bringing life outdoors

It's not just about adding decoration. It's about how people use space to safely connect, socialize and feel a sense of community. Something amazing happens when you can share space with strangers. That's one of the reasons why we work to develop exciting outdoor concepts.

Enhanced outdoor places means more reasons to enjoy and explore downtown.



Member Service and Value

- At the start of the year, we delivered five of our signature downtown tours. In the summer, we created the **Patio and Mural tour**, which allowed attendees to tour downtown sights and spend time on outdoor patios safely.
- We launched a self-guided tour, the **Downtown Winnipeg Ghost Ride**, featuring several downtown sights and landmarks, which gave people a chance to have some physically-distant fun this Halloween. Several businesses along the way participated by offering specials to participants.

“Something amazing happens when you can share space with strangers.”



Member Service and Value

- We installed **10 micro pop-up parks** with edible plants including basil, parsley and cherry tomatoes.
- In partnership with Tweed Collective, we continued our native planting project, with a **focus on more long-term, sustainable options** by choosing perennial prairie plants native to our province.
- We partnered with Storefront MB and Winnipeg Trails Association to support Benchmark, an international design competition. This led to the installation of **fully accessible public seating on Graham Ave.** called PIICNIIC. The 30-foot-long bench gives visitors a place to sit and rest, eat and connect with others.
- Working with Synonym Art Consultation, we **provided funding for eight murals** in the Wall-to-Wall Mural & Culture Festival, adding beauty and vibrancy to downtown.
- We collaborated with six other BIZes to create the **Central Winnipeg Bike Loop**, a preferred route for cyclists connecting seven Winnipeg neighbourhoods.
- We installed **lights on the rooftops of transit shelters** to help add light and charm to the bus stops in the dark winter months.



Advocacy and Influence

- The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ worked with the Exchange District BIZ to advocate for lower parking rates and in July, the City of Winnipeg **reduced on-street parking rates by \$0.75.**
- We worked with the City of Winnipeg and the Exchange District BIZ to offer **complimentary one-hour parking on weekdays** to encourage more visitors downtown during the pandemic.
- We created **19 designated curbside pick-up locations** to help businesses provide quick, physically distant service to their customers.
- We made progress on our ongoing advocacy for **safe, accessible public washrooms** in downtown Winnipeg. In the summer, Council approved the public restroom strategy and announced its commitment to setting up temporary washrooms this year with plans for a **permanent public washroom downtown in 2021.**





Connecting and engaging

Communication and flexibility have been crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic. While all of us were throwing out old plans and making new ones, we kept the focus on providing value for our members. Initially, this meant keeping our members up-to-date with evolving public health guidelines. As downtown slowly reopened again, we adapted some of our signature events and programs and continued providing valuable downtown experiences, while following all health and safety guidelines.



Member Service and Value

- We ramped up member communications to provide information on government supports and regulations. In the first three months of the pandemic, we sent **more than 20 e-newsletters** with helpful resources to our member businesses.
- We launched our **#OpenwithCare** campaign to safely welcome visitors back downtown and help our member businesses demonstrate their commitment to operating safely.
- The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ Instagram account showcases member businesses and downtown activities and events. This year, the account grew to nearly **17,000 followers, an increase of 31% from last year.**
- The **#finditdowntown** hashtag has been used over 7,000 times on Instagram in 2020.
- We rolled out a **redesigned, user-friendly website** with an interactive map of downtown businesses to help visitors easily find places to shop, eat and explore.



Enhance Downtown

- To keep downtown in people's minds and hearts during the pandemic, we launched **Downtown Sounds**. The five-video series featured local musicians including Leonard Sumner, Sierra Noble, and Sweet Alibi playing at downtown destinations. The heartwarming videos included the message, "we can't wait to welcome you back." The videos are still online for folks to enjoy and they've had more than **23,000 views on all social media channels**.
- After pausing our e-newsletter designed to promote downtown events, the Mingle started up again in the fall and is delivered to **a list of nearly 5,000 folks**, to keep them up-to-date on downtown news and events.
- Bringing our signature events back safely was a priority as the summer temperatures allowed more outdoor activities to take place.
 - Fitness in the Park offered free physically-distanced fitness classes instructed by Downtown Winnipeg BIZ members **five days a week**. For the first time, we extended the Fitness in the Park until the end of September.
 - A smaller version of the Downtown Winnipeg Farmers' Market kicked off in August and featured a rotation of **20 vendors physically distanced**, selling fresh and local produce, baking, jewelry and other local artisan goods.
 - An average of **30 folks per show** came to listen to the live Downtown Sounds Concert Series that featured 16 different performances, with a focus on performers of diverse backgrounds, in different locations throughout downtown – Air Canada Park, the Chinese Gardens, and True North Square.

Would you like to receive the MEMO, our member e-newsletter?

Email info@downtownwinnipegbiz.com to be added to the distribution list.

Would you like to stay up-to-date on downtown news and events?

Sign up to receive the Mingle newsletter.



“We kept the focus on providing value for members.”



Helping to make downtown beautiful

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ Enviro Team works to clean and beautify downtown streets, sidewalks, storefronts, and public places. Seven days a week, team members remove graffiti, pick up litter, water flowers, clean transit shelters, and clean downtown sidewalks of snow, dirt and debris. This year, to do our part to help stop the spread of COVID-19, they focused on additional cleaning of high-use spaces such as transit shelters, indoor walkways and cigarette butt receptacles.

Every summer, thanks to support from the Province of Manitoba, the Enviro Team hires extra staff to help keep downtown cleaner and greener. These positions are offered exclusively to students to help ensure young Manitobans can find work over the summer months.



Enhance Downtown

- **79,264 pails*** of litter picked by hand.
- **3,812 graffiti tags*** removed.
- **2,646 sidewalks*** ploughed.
- **630 posters*** removed.
- **6,932 transit shelters*** cleaned.
- **84 hanging flower baskets*** installed.

*Reporting period: January 1, 2020 - October 1, 2020





Now
Leasing
BUILD TO
SUIT
CALL
942-

CANAL
GYM
GIRLS
ADRIAN
BROW

GARRICK
HOTEL

Fame

TRADITIONAL
PLANT VARIETIES

IGRAH (Igra) - **Yellow**
This is a very old plant
variety, which was used
in the past to make a drink
and to treat various ailments.

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AANIIN

Ojibwe

TAWOW/TÂNSI

Cree

WOTZIYE

Dene

PEEHTIKWAY

Michif

IYUSKIN/KUWA

Ojibwa

TUNGASUGIT

Inuktitut

BIENVENUE

French

WELCOME

English

Diversity and inclusion downtown

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ embraces, values and celebrates diversity. It is important we foster a downtown where everyone feels welcome and represented, and where everyone belongs. We know there's more work to be done. We are listening and learning, and will continue to act on what we learn.



Enhance Downtown

- In partnership with APTN, the sixth annual Indigenous Garden was planted at Air Canada Park. It showcased a variety of plants significant in Indigenous culture, complete with on-site signage to give visitors an opportunity to learn more about the plants and their importance to Indigenous life and culture.

“We are listening and learning, and will continue to act on what we learn.”



Member Service and Value

- The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ worked with members to create a **downtown Winnipeg BIPOC-owned business directory**.
- In our Downtown Sounds Concert Series, **70% of the musicians featured are BIPOC artists**.



Organizational Alignment

- The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ worked with our **Indigenous Advisory Circle** to create and act on goals to better ensure Indigenous perspectives are included in our work.
- Equity, diversity and accessibility in the workplace are important to us. We have continued our work to **identify gaps in hiring practices and create new recruitment strategies**.
- We recognize we operate on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ worked to ensure our **land acknowledgement is visible in our print and digital materials**.



Finance and governance

The Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone (BIZ) is governed and administered by a board of individuals who are a proprietor, director or employee of a member business, and one member appointed by Council. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is primarily funded by zone levies collected by the City of Winnipeg based on an Annual Rental Value (ARV) of a business operating within the designated downtown Winnipeg zone. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ works with an annual operating budget of just over **\$4.3 million**. **\$3.1 million** is funded through the levy and **\$1.2 million** is funded through non-levy contributions including sponsorships, grants and partnerships. Funds are focused on initiatives aimed to provide a downtown that is clean, safe and well-connected, where businesses can thrive and everyone feels welcome.

Finance and Governance 2020 Program Highlights*



\$1.2+ million

Safety and Outreach



\$1+ million

Clean, Green and Connected



\$800,000+

Promotion and Engagement

* Additional operating expenses not shown include advocacy and research, funding reserves and administration costs (incl: staffing, building lease, IT).

Looking forward.

Without a doubt, this year has brought challenges, but it's also taught us a lot. We know that things will continue to evolve, but our priority will always be to listen and work to strengthen our downtown. One thing is for sure, we're hopeful for the future of downtown and are focused on providing help and support wherever we can.

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is grateful to our sponsors, supporters, volunteers, stakeholders and donors who share our belief that a strong downtown is the key to a thriving city.

The success of our programs would not be possible without the generous support of our partners including Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, Manitoba Public Insurance, RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg Free Press, Workers Compensation Board, as well as our invaluable partners at the City of Winnipeg including Active Transportation; Graffiti Control; Planning, Property and Development; Public Works; Special Events; Winnipeg Parking Authority; Winnipeg Transit; and the Mayor's Office. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ appreciates all of our program and event partners and sponsors.

Thank you for your support and collaboration.





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#finditdowntown

Front cover: Mural by Queen Andrea, *LOVE ALL DAY*