

UP TO WN WATERLOO



ANNUAL REPORT



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome to the Uptown Waterloo BIA's 2019 Annual Report! Since 1972 we have been coordinating the organization, physical improvement and economic development of Uptown – helping to beautify and promote the heart of Waterloo.

This report gives us a chance to reflect on last year's many successes as well as opportunities to make changes and improvements. Uptown

continued its transformation – including extending the updated streetscaping between Bridgeport Road and Elgin Street. We welcomed 32 new businesses to our growing Uptown family – the most we've had since street and ION construction – and we still have many more on the way! For these reasons and more, we can and should celebrate. However, we must also remember that, for various different reasons, nine businesses closed in Uptown, six moved and several businesses are still in recovery mode after years of construction and disruption.

Every four years the BIA puts out a nomination call for the Board of Directors and, in 2019, we officially welcomed nine new Board members (see a complete

listing below). We also experienced some staffing changes. Most recently, we were joined by Tahnee Hipel, our new Office & Program Coordinator. She took over the role from Dawne Taylor-Gilders who has now stepped into our Events & Outreach Manager position – newly vacated by Ashley Gallant.

Tried and true events like the Chili Cook-off/Mac & Cheese Competition, Sun Life Uptown Waterloo Jazz Festival and Buskers Carnival, Holiday Hop 'N' Shop etc. along with additional events like the Raptors' playoff games in the Square, Sights & Lights event to help launch the ION, Official Holiday Tree Lighting and the Comedy Festival's new family program brought thousands to Uptown and added vibrancy to our core.

Together with our membership and volunteers, we are nurturing a new Uptown. One that may look different from a few years ago but stays true to what's important – thriving businesses and economy, healthy lifestyle options, beautiful and useful outdoor spaces, innovative learning opportunities, caring neighbourhoods, impactful arts and civic engagement and sustainable development.

Thank you for working with us and inspiring us. We are excited for what the next year has in store for us and are grateful you are joining us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Nancy Fox
Board Chair

Tracy Van Kalsbeek
Executive Director

2019-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NANCY FOX

Investor's Group | Chair

MELISSA DURRELL

Durrell Communications | Vice Chair

KRISTEN HAMMOND

BDO Canada LLP | Treasurer

TRACY VAN KALSBECK

Uptown Waterloo BIA | Secretary

GABRIELLE ARVANITIS

Director

NICK BENNINGER

Fat Sparrow Group | Director

TENILLE BONOBUORE

City Councillor, Ward 7

RYAN GOOD

Cabri Management | Director

LAWRENCE GREAVES

Oldfield, Greaves, D'Agostino
& Scriven | Director

ANDREA HARDING

CIGI | Director

KATHY KING

Primus PM | Director

RAMI SAID

Patent Social | Director

KRISTIN SAINSBURY

City of Waterloo | Economic
Development Officer

DANA SHORTT

Dana Shortt Gourmet
& Gifts | Director

KIRK VINES

Beertown | Director

MARK WHALEY

Waterloo MedTech | Director

JANET WELDON

Sun Life Financial | Director

BIA STAFF

TRACY VAN KALSBECK

Executive Director

NATALIE GALLO

Marketing & Communications Manager

DAWNE TAYLOR-GILDERS

Events & Outreach Manager

TAHNEE HIPEL

Office & Program Coordinator

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

REBRANDING

In 2019, the Uptown Waterloo BIA embarked on a quest to update our 47-year-old brand. This process began with the implementation of our new Strategic Plan, developed in 2018. With this new strategic direction, the BIA aimed to build a bolder brand that is distinct, demonstrates our leadership and innovation and clearly tells people who we are, what we value and why we are unique. Uptown Waterloo has also experienced tremendous growth and change in the last ten years and a new brand helps to tell our story in a fresh and exciting way.

The BIA worked alongside advertising firm STC, professed “storytellers” who have worked with other cities, BIAs and a few Waterloo Region entities including Wilfrid Laurier University. The comprehensive process included one-on-one interviews with BIA Board and staff members, discussion and feedback from the BIA’s diverse Marketing committee, roundtable stakeholder sessions and membership surveys. The end result is an updated identity for the BIA that embodies the current essence of Uptown – the heart of our city that is welcoming, safe, vibrant and evolving.



HELLO ION, GOODBYE CONSTRUCTION



For years we watched with anticipation as the ION moved from planning to construction and finally, reality. It has helped connect our communities like never before. The launch of the powerful, new artery into the urban landscape of Kitchener and Waterloo was marked by free ridership and a social crawl hosted by the Uptown Waterloo BIA, Downtown Kitchener BIA, Region of Waterloo, Keolis and local merchants in both cores. Thousands took part in the Sights & Lights event and rediscovered what makes Uptown and Downtown unique and vibrant.

The completion of Phase 2 of the Uptown Waterloo King Street streetscape this past fall marked the end of five long years of ION and streetscape construction. The transformation of Uptown has been both difficult and good at the same time. While we have seen some businesses close or move away, we have also seen many more arrive or persevere and stay – which says a lot about the vibrancy and promise of our core. Uptown businesses are all in varying stages of recovery mode and are looking forward to a quieter year without road closures and accompanying parking issues.

EVENT HIGHLIGHT: UPTOWN HOLIDAY HOP ‘N SHOP

Previously known as the Uptown Holiday Marketplace, 2019’s Holiday Hop ‘N Shop grew upon the success of the new activities incorporated into the event in 2018. The 2nd annual Official Christmas Tree Lighting, accompanied by live music, filled up the Waterloo Public Square again; Santa Paws was a great success among pet owners; and more businesses participated in the Hand in Hand program to host an event or promotion during the Hop ‘N Shop—the majority of whom said the event had a significant impact on their business that weekend. In 2019, the event also featured a new market pop-up powered by Shopify, the Stitch & Kitsch Craft Market, the beautiful Mistletoe Lane, ice skating in the Square, the inaugural Candy Cane Lane and a social media contest to win a fire truck ride with Waterloo Fire through uptown and Waterloo Park.



SERVICES PROVIDED TO MEMBERS IN 2019

- New graffiti removal program and other beautification initiatives
- Co-op advertising funding
- Hand in Hand special event funding
- General membership meetings
- “Uptown Brainerly” learning workshops
- Safe bars and businesses meetings with WRPS
- Construction advocacy
- Spotlight Waterloo event funding

UPTOWN 2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

WATERLOO



475+
BUSINESSES

32
BUSINESSES OPENED

9
BUSINESSES CLOSED

6
BUSINESSES MOVED

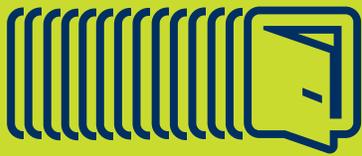


INDUSTRY ROUND-UP

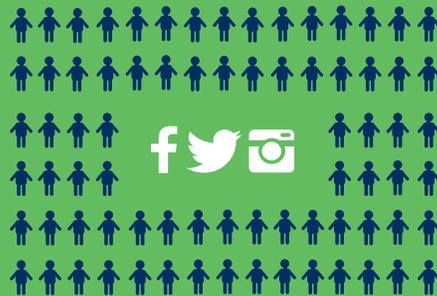
63% SERVICES

20% FOOD

17% RETAIL



3000
COPIES OF
UPBEAT
MAGAZINE
DISTRIBUTED



43K SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

97%
BUSINESS
RETENTION

f t i

84%
INCREASE
IN SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

f t i

2.5
MILLION
SOCIAL MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS



65+
MEDIA MENTIONS

16K
HAND IN HAND
FUNDS GIVEN



34K
WEBSITE
VISITORS

\$34K
SOLD IN
UPTOWN
DOLLARS

57%
INCREASE

70K+*
EVENT ATTENDEES

40K BUSKERS

15K JAZZ FESTIVAL

15K LUMEN

2K KW COMEDY



43K PROMOTIONAL MAPS
MAILED
TO CITY RESIDENTS



IN E-NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS



17 SURVEYS
SENT TO MEMBERS

255 RESPONSES

**This number does not include the hundreds of people who attend other smaller events throughout the year*