

UP TO WN WATERLOO



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



To say the last year has been another challenging time for our Uptown family, is an understatement. On the heels of years of construction, Covid-19 has had a significant and long-term effect on many of our businesses.

But, Uptown stands strong and resilient. Businesses have adapted, changing the way they operate and engage with their customers. With pandemic restrictions added and lifted regularly in 2021, they navigated the waters with hope and perseverance – and the BIA was there to provide advice, ideas, coaching, funding, advocacy and, importantly, an ear to listen.

Over the past year, we welcomed 33 new businesses to our fold, and we still have more on the way. For these reasons and more, we can and should celebrate. However, we ought to also remember, for various reasons, we lost 11 businesses and most, if not all that are left continue to operate in a state of flux and uncertainty.

Traditional events continued to be canceled or changed to virtual in 2021. And, while we weren't able to host our flagship festivals, we were able to continue the success of our open air markets – updated to a weekly night

market in the summer and an additional Mayor's Oktoberfest Market in the fall, kick off another new art walk on Dominion Lane, close laneways and streets for patio and public activations and initiate several innovative media and advertising campaigns in an effort to bring people to Uptown in a safe manner.

We continued our advocacy work – writing letters, emails and meeting with many government and elected officials and the media, to showcase how the pandemic was affecting our Uptown businesses. Knowing that support for pandemic-related costs continued to be needed, we added to the Come Back Up Fund – providing another \$150,000 in financial assistance to Uptown businesses – something we couldn't have done without support from the City of Waterloo.

Moving forward, we will work with our membership to recover from the past two years and recreate our Uptown while staying 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.

As always, remember that our Board and staff are here for you and honoured to serve the heart of Waterloo.

Sincerely,

Nancy Fox
Board Chair

Tracy Van Kalsbeek
Executive Director

2019 - 2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Investor's Group
Chair



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City Councillor, Ward 7



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Executive Director



JANE BARKLEY
Marketing &
Communications
Manager



**DIEGO ALMARAZ
DE LA GARZA**
Program & Place-
making Coordinator



**DAWNE TAYLOR-
GILDERS**
Events & Outreach
Manager



2021 HIGHLIGHTS



COME BACK UP FUND



When directions from Federal and Provincial government forced the closure of small businesses across the country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the BIA created a post COVID-19 funding program – similar to the Hand in Hand program.

Businesses could apply for up to \$2,500 in funding for help covering costs such as:

- Increased cleaning and sanitation procedures e.g. hand washing stations, hand sanitizer, PPE, cleaning supplies etc. related to Government and Public Health recommendations;
- Creating and managing online sales e.g. e-commerce platform – related to changes made because of the pandemic;
- Marketing and advertising to promote/share changes made to their business because of the pandemic;
- Capital expenditures related to air quality improvements or social distancing requirements;
- Training for staff related to changes made to their business because of the pandemic;
- Other expenditures related to changes made because of the pandemic as approved by the BIA

In 2021 the BIA was proud to continue this funding program helping a total of 75 businesses with \$150,000.



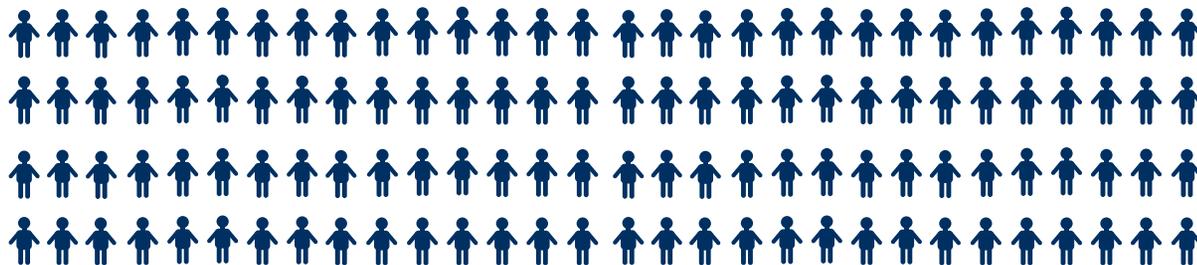
 **\$150,000** GIVEN TO **75** BUSINESSES

UPTOWN NIGHT MARKET



To add vibrancy to the core while giving our community a safe way to interact during the pandemic, in July 2021, Uptown Waterloo held its first-ever Night Market series in the Communitech Parking lot adjacent to Dominion Lane. We worked closely with Public Health to ensure proper health regulations were in place.

In total, we had nine markets held between mid-July through mid-September that brought 7,500 people to Uptown. Vendors consisted of local makers and businesses, including some Uptown BIA members. Interest from vendors grew each week and we received countless positive comments from residents.

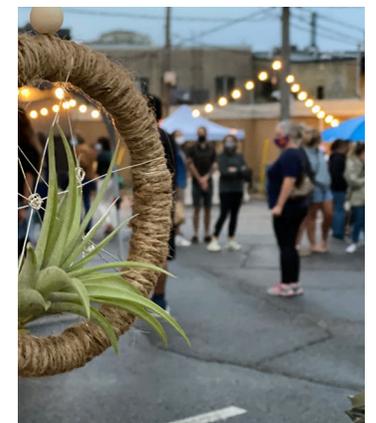


7,500
ATTENDEES

PLACEMAKING

Placemaking continues to be a priority for the BIA, as we grow the vibrant, identifiable and joyful Uptown vibe. Some of the 2021 placemaking projects in Uptown included:

- The #MeetMeOnPrincess temporary pedestrian street (a collaboration between the Uptown BIA, the City of Waterloo, Shared Places, ABA Architects, BOKO and Uptown Businesses), which included colourful installations, a street mural and comfortable chairs. Princess Street is a destination and anchor for Uptown Waterloo and was closed to allow for pedestrian traffic and enjoyment of patios (from Dorset St. to King St.) from late April through the fall.
- Dominion Lane was also closed to activate the space with patios, lighting and our weekly Night Market.
- The FUSE light installation at the corner of Dorset and Princess Sts. (now at the Shops) is a collection of interactive light pillars that can sense and react to movement, inspiring a sense of wonder, intrigue, and excitement for passersby. When visiting the installation, guests can approach the light pillars and see the colour change in different ways.



ART WALKS

The Uptown Art Walks (Hughes Lane, Dominion Lane and the Winter Art Walk) – could be found both in the front windows and on the back doors of Uptown businesses, continuing to provide a safe and inclusive space to enjoy public art.

Building on the successful reception of the Hughes Lane and Dominion Lane Art Walks, the BIA implemented other public art initiatives in order to continue creating opportunities for the community to explore the core safely during the pandemic. One highlight of these initiatives in 2021 was the Winter Art Walk during the holiday season. A total of 18 business windows were painted by local artists in a festive holiday theme, adding to the 14 colourful murals on Hughes and Dominion Lanes, creating a more vibrant Uptown that people could explore and discover. Participating businesses and local artists included:

- Engel & Volkers, Eyes On King, House of Bamboo artist: Natasha Rose
- LUXE Nail Bar, Princess Cafe, The Truth Beauty Company artist: Simone Cotrell
- Massage Addict, Midnight Run, Zero Waste Bulk, Champa Kitchen artist: Pamela Rojas
- Canaccord Genuity, Revive Game Bar, Seasons Fine Clothing artist: Robyn Lightwalker
- Score Pizza, Waterloo Medical Cosmetics artist: Tabatha Donaldson
- Copper Branch artist: Diego Almaraz
- Loft 106 artist: Dawne Taylor-Gilders
- Crumby Cookie Dough Company artist: Mira Barkley



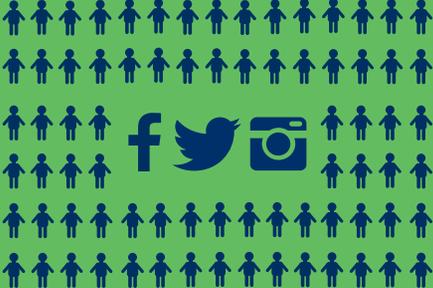
 **74**
MEDIA MENTIONS
38 INTERVIEWS


3 MIL.
SOCIAL MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS

 **22**
SURVEYS
SENT TO MEMBERS
480
RESPONSES

150K
COME BACK UP
FUNDS GIVEN
TO **75** BUSINESSES





52K SOCIAL MEDIA
FOLLOWERS

2021
IN REVIEW


\$21K
SOLD IN
UPTOWN
DOLLARS


35 NEW BUSINESSES
OPENED


21K
HAND IN HAND
FUNDS GIVEN

 **7K**
ATTENDEES
OF FIRST-EVER
NIGHT MARKET