



We're Back!
Downtown

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COMMISSION HALIFAX

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Participants at the Taking BLK History Market in the Halifax Brewery Farmers Market.
Photo: Ryan Williams, Unbound Media



The view of Brunswick Street from Halifax Citadel National Historic Site. Photo: Discover Halifax

Cover: Large X – Browsing at Taz Records. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging
Cover: Medium X – Twinkling lights at Bedford Row outdoor patios. Photo: Stoo Metz Photography
Cover: Small X – "Victoria, Roman Goddess of Victory" mural by Mike Burt, at 1221 Barrington Street.
Photo: Stoo Metz Photography



X Inset – Amos Pewter. Photo: Michelle Doucette Photography
Window shopping at Urban Outfitters. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging



Just about every annual report I saw last year began with the line, “2020 was a year unlike any other...” – which was true. But then we hit 2021 and things looked remarkably similar. For Downtown Halifax, and indeed downtowns around the globe, it meant quiet streets and the continued loss of key markets, such as tourists, students, event attendees, and the workers who normally fill our offices. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit Downtown Halifax hard, and the impacts of this will be felt for a long time to come.

Before the pandemic, we were doing well. We were tracking in a positive direction in 16 of our 20 strategic priority objectives. But as our reality changed, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission Board of Directors took the step of refocusing on two goals: **Downtown Vibrancy** and **Downtown Prosperity**. Our four action teams created a suite of programs to address these, in the areas of Advocacy, Marketing & Communications, Membership Engagement, and Placemaking. You can see highlights of this year’s action plan on page 16.

Thanks to vaccines, we do anticipate a much better year ahead. We will continue to advocate for government supports, create marketing programs to bring our customers back Downtown, instill vibrancy, and engage with you, our members. Together, we will work toward the dawn of a new era of Downtown prosperity.

A handwritten signature of Paul MacKinnon in black ink.

2021 *Membership Survey*

On a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is “a very serious problem,” Members rate the following items as serious problems for Downtown Halifax today (5-7 rating):

- Parking rates and availability **74%**
- Impact of COVID-19 on your business **69%**
- Vacant storefronts **59%**

VISION *Canada's Favourite Downtown*

MISSION *To passionately pursue a more prosperous and vibrant Downtown*



Patio season at Garrison Brewing Company. Photo: Michelle Doucette Photography



Bedford Row patios at night. Photo: Stoo Metz Photography



Max Rastelli, Owner of Segway Nova Scotia.
Photo: Michelle Doucette Photography



Paul MacKinnon
Chief Executive Officer



Kimberly Dossett
Director of Operations



Ivy Ho
Director of Communications



Allana MacDonald Mills
Director of Marketing



Raf Mikhael Peligro
Communications and
Marketing Coordinator



Eric Jonsson
Project Coordinator,
Navigator Street Outreach

Placemaking Manager:
Vacant

Membership Engagement Manager:
Vacant



Kayaking in Halifax Harbour. Photo: Tourism Nova Scotia

X inset – "Within the Body" mural by Alice MacLean, located at the Halifax Ferry Terminal.

Photo: James MacLean

2021
Membership Survey

If HRM were to commit to more funds to Downtown Halifax, Members believe the following should be their top priority:

- Re-development of the Cogswell Interchange **21%**
- Streetscaping on Barrington Street **14%**
- Better public transit **13%**
- Incentives for residential development **12%**

Gordon Whittaker, Chair
Side Door

Sarah Flynn, Vice Chair
Sarah Flynn Consulting

Christian Rankin, Secretary Treasurer
Obladee, A Wine Bar, Wonderlust Media Inc.

Kristin O'Toole, Member at Large
Develop Nova Scotia

Pino Pagnottella, Member at Large
Sterling Properties

Issmat Al-Akhali
Granville Hall Student Residence

Marilisa Benigno
Benigno Group of Companies

Erin Esiyok-Prime
Events East Group

Wendy Friedman
Biscuit General Store

Matthew Martel
Black Business Initiative

Nathalie Morin
Rousseau Chocolatier

Sanjeev Pushkarna
Nova Scotia Power

Jeff Ransome
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel

Jake Whalen
Halifax Regional Municipality

ADVOCACY ACTION TEAM

Issmat Al-Akhali
Granville Hall Student Residence

Kristin O'Toole
Develop Nova Scotia

Sanjeev Pushkarna
Nova Scotia Power

Christian Rankin
Obladee Wine Bar, Wonderlust Media

Jeff Ransome
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel

Gordon Whittaker
Side Door

MARKETING ACTION TEAM

Melissa Carey
RCR Hospitality Group

Katie Conklin
Discover Halifax

Ankur Gupta
Scanway Catering

Krista Lingley
Parks Canada

Emily MacNeill-Liot
Events East Group

Jessica Muzzerall
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel

Laura Oakley
Legendary Hospitality Group

Emily Richards
Neptune Theatre

Jenna Rideout
Develop Nova Scotia

Andrea Saint-Pierre
Craft Nova Scotia

Leah Veinot
Discover Centre

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT ACTION TEAM

Tyler Beers
Marsh Canada Limited

Marilisa Benigno
Benigno Group of Companies

Dan Bourque
Crombie REIT

Kevin Burgess
Ambassatours Gray Line/
Murphy's on the Water

Erin Esiyok-Prime
Events East Group

PLACEMAKING ACTION TEAM

Adriana Afford
Argyle Fine Art

Mike Burt
Mural Grant Jury Member

Lindsay Ann Cory
Nocturne

James Janssen
Mural Grant Jury Member

T. J. Maguire
Develop Nova Scotia

Matthew Martel
Black Business Initiative

Nathalie Morin
Rousseau Chocolatier

Annie Rankmore
Discover Halifax

Grant Ruffinengo
Onside

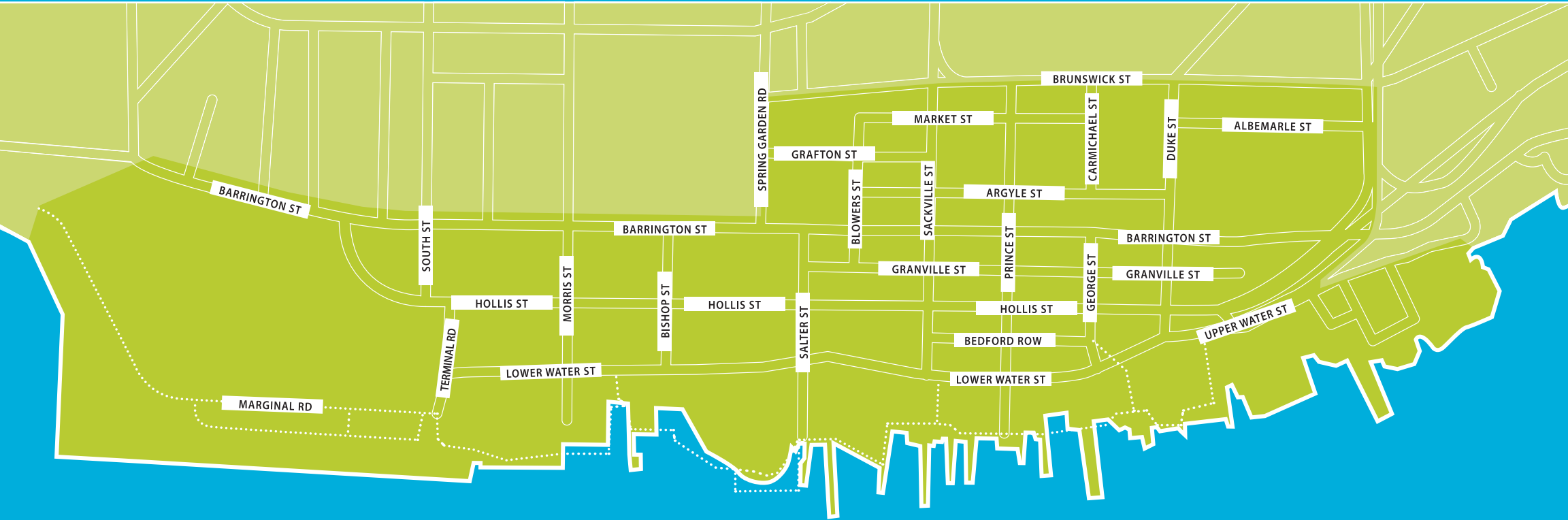
Jeremy Smith
Freak Lunchbox

Amber Solberg
Mural Grant Jury Member

Jake Whalen
Halifax Regional Municipality

Elora Wilkinson
Mural Grant Jury Member

Rose Zack
Mural Grant Jury Member



If your business is located in Downtown Halifax, you are automatically a member of DHBC. DHBC represents all organizations, including property owners and tenants, located in the area between the Halifax Waterfront and the waterside of Brunswick Street, and between the Cogswell Interchange and the south end of Barrington Street.

This Annual Report highlights the resources and supports that Downtown Halifax

Business Commission provides to help organizations and businesses make the best of being in Downtown Halifax. If you have questions along the way, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

For more information, contact:
info@downtownhalifax.ca or
 (902) 423-6658
 1546 Barrington Street, Suite 104
downtownhalifax.ca.





X inset –
Judy Anderson,
Owner of FireWorks
Gallery.
Photo: Chris Geworsky
Imaging

The view from the Stone's Throw Patio, Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel. Photo: Tourism Nova Scotia

Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) is the voice and resource for the businesses located in the central business district of Halifax, Nova Scotia. DHBC develops and executes programs, events, and marketing initiatives to make Downtown Halifax a better place to live, work, and play and to foster a place where businesses want to be.

DHBC's mission is to passionately pursue a more prosperous and vibrant Downtown Halifax, through Downtown mobility, good development, Downtown placemaking, DHBC leadership, and membership services.

DHBC represents businesses located in the area between the Halifax Waterfront and the waterside of Brunswick Street, and

between the Cogswell Interchange and the south end of Barrington Street. There are approximately 1,600 businesses within the geographic area. By virtue of being in the Downtown district, these businesses are members of DHBC. DHBC gives its membership a collective voice at the table on all major issues concerning Downtown Halifax, including Downtown development

and heritage preservation with elected officials, the media, and other stakeholders.

Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) is the largest business improvement district (BID) on the East Coast. With the largest membership, we can do the most for our members and we are proud to be your BID.

2021 Membership Survey

The Top 4 activities that Members thought DHBC should put their resources into:

- Attracting public events to the Downtown **83%**
- Beautification of the Downtown **81%**
- Lobbying government on Downtown issues **81%**
- Working with government to improve mobility to/ around Downtown **74%**



2021 *Membership Survey*

83% of Members believe that Downtown Halifax Business Commission makes a positive contribution to the state of Downtown Halifax.

The Old Town Clock at night. Photo: Discover Halifax

BUSINESS PROSPERITY Programs

ADVOCACY

Federal advocacy plan (IDA Canada):

- Advocate for creation/extension of COVID-19 support programs (e.g., CERB, rent assistance, sales tax data, business support grants, return to office for government workers) through direct contacts, media relations, etc.

Provincial advocacy plan:

- Advocate for a Provincial Recovery Plan (with a Downtown Halifax priority).
- Advocate for creation/extension/improvement of COVID-19 support programs (e.g., business support grants, hotel tax rebate, providing personal protective equipment, return to office for government workers, etc.), consumer confidence.
- Red Tape Reduction

Municipal key issues:

- COVID-19 support programs, no patio fees, open streets program, tax relief, eliminating COVID-19 event waiver, return to office for government workers
- Commercial tax reform
- Downtown bike lane network
- Parking strategy

Municipal issues to monitor:

- Construction mitigation plans and enforcement
- Integrated Mobility Plan
- Halifax Transit Plan
- Communication strategy for Cogswell and Spring Garden construction projects

PLACEMAKING

- Deck the Downtown Grant (winter)
- Get Ready for Summer Grant (summer), funded by ACOA

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

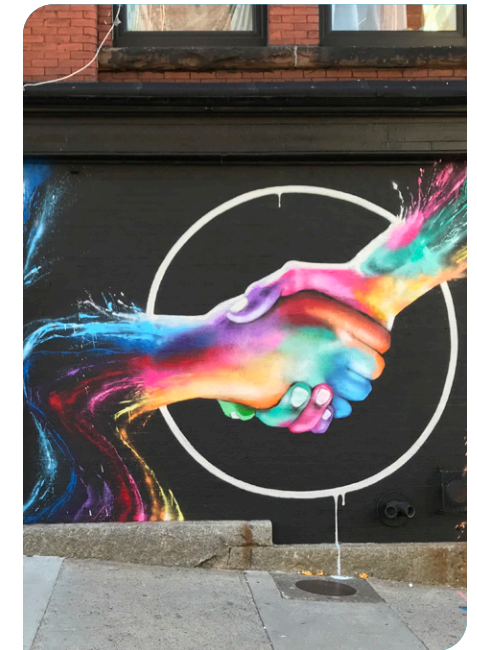
- Develop spring/summer campaigns ("Meet Me Downtown" and patio campaign).
- Develop winter 2021 campaign.
- Develop general brand campaigns (print and digital advertising).
- Manage additional brand progression (creation of "personas," other updates as needed).
- Produce new shareable photography assets.
- Enhance social media strategy to leverage and grow substantial base of followers.
- Produce Season 3 of "Downtown Lowdown" podcast.
- Continue Meltwater media monitoring (issues and programming).
- Manage ongoing website updates and improvements.
- Produce Holiday Gift Guide (with Spring Garden Area Business Association).
- Launch new Open Online Digital grant program.
- Launch Downtown Halifax Live music grant program.
- Promote businesses owned by visible minorities.
- Develop new parking promotion (video,

- new ParkSmart website, free parking days, app-use strategy).
- Develop DHBC organizational communications plan.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

- Develop professional development and information sessions (webinars, training sessions, Navigator Street Outreach).
- Maintain DHBC database.
- Train new and current members on using the DHBC website.
- Contact members at least twice a week, with tracking tool to catalogue issues/concerns.
- Host virtual membership meetings and events (networking socials, retail roundtable, AGM, new development meetings).
- Distribute printed Annual Reports to all members.
- Respond to member inquiries.
- Membership communications (e.g., bulletins, notices, Downtown Members Update (multiple times per week as needed), website update on Strategic Plan, Annual Report, members section and Strategic Plan microsite on website).
- Re-engage Neighbourhood Captains to celebrate/welcome new members with Welcome Package.
- Develop Cogswell District communications plan (with HRM communications).

- Develop communications strategies for developments.
- Develop and promote "Random Acts of Coffee" promotion.
- Host "virtual coffee breaks" with a Halifamous host.
- Develop a campaign targeted at office workers.
- Create a new Community-Led Organization (with SGABA).
- Develop a new "Downtown Lunch Program" for office workers.



"Connection" mural by Daniel Burt, located on the Blowers side of 1558 Barrington Street.
Photo: Stoo Metz Photography

BUSINESS VIBRANCY Programs

ADVOCACY

Federal Advocacy Plan (IDA Canada):

- Share national policy paper, "One National Voice", which articulates five key focus areas and program proposals.
- Share of recommendations from Canadian Urban Institute's "Bring Back Main Street" (BBMS) and "Restore the Core" papers.
- Coordinate with regional business improvement district (BID) associations and IDA Canada.
- Hold an election forum.

Provincial advocacy plan:

- Grant Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) greater authority through Halifax Charter ("person powers").
- Develop effective relationships with key departments (Inclusive Business Growth, Municipal Affairs).
- Provide new BID support.
- Renew Main Street program.
- Hold an election forum.

Municipal key issues:

- Integrate BBMS recommendations into Halifax Partnership COVID-19 Recovery Plan
- Integrate Downtown priorities into 2022-2027 Halifax Partnership Economic Growth Strategy
- Long and short-term municipal infrastructure investment
- Cogswell District
- Centre Plan "Package B" (including Downtown Plan revisions)
- Residential development and conversion

Municipal issues to monitor:

- Reintroduction of Halifax Regional Police beat patrol
- Windsor Street Exchange/railcut
- Green Network Plan
- Regional Plan
- Poverty/Homelessness Strategy
- HalifACT sustainability plan
- Navigator Street Outreach program
- Downtown shuttle
- Argyle Entertainment District noise by-law

Other programs:

- Art of City Building conference and Canadian Urban Institute workshop
- Navigator Street Outreach program
- Partnership funding to advance strategic goals
- Research opportunities

PLACEMAKING

- Manage and implement "Gritty to Pretty" Grant programs – Open Grant and Mural Mural.
- Complete Salter Street and Ferry Terminal murals.
- Downtown Halifax Crew (on-street May to September).
- Manage painted picnic tables program.
- Install Barrington Street Heritage District banners.
- Install Old South Suburb Heritage Conservation District banners.
- Supervise poster kiosk monthly maintenance.

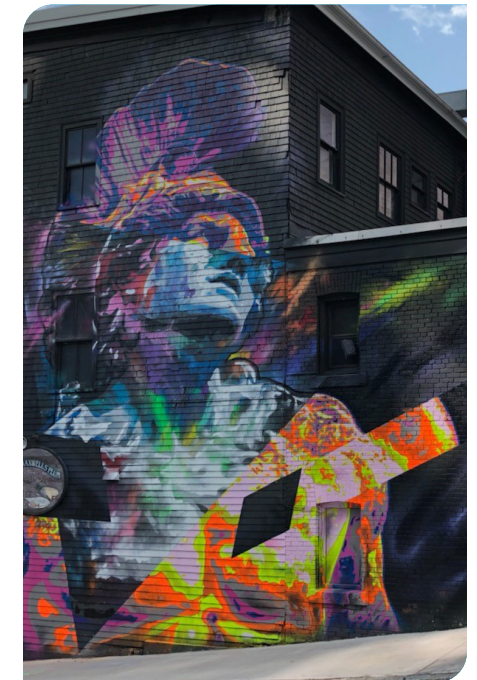
- Manage graffiti clean-up.
- Coordinate/manage NSBLEC placemaking programming (provincially funded).
- Christmas wreaths
- Manage Pole Banner program.
- Implement Peace and Friendship Park holiday lights installation (year-round).
- Implement new spring and summer light activation in Peace and Friendship Park.
- Maintain capital assets.
- Install of "Rainbow Art" crosswalk.
- Manage Bedford Row lights installation (mid-June to March).
- Produce 10 small light shows with Gobos.
- Produce "Pizza Mural" street art.
- Apply for the CHCI grant (Connectivity Tunnel of Light and DeLIGHTful Downtown light show).

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Develop holiday campaign.
- Support Switch Halifax: Open Street Sundays.
- Promote and participate in Open City.
- Sponsor Downtown events.
- Coordinate and develop activations of events.
- Promote and distribute online Downtown Events Calendar.
- Promote HRM's Grand Parade concert series.
- Produce Tunes at Noon summer concert series on the Halifax Waterfront.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

- Meet with developers on Construction Mitigation Plans (CMP) and provide input and share CMP on the DHBC website.
- Develop and coordinate DHBC Downtown Welcome Centre programming.
- Distribute dog bowls to patios.
- Develop Downtown "Cash Mobs" for retail members.
- Host outdoor coffee breaks for members.
- Promote Discover Halifax/Events East online event calendar.



"Defeat" mural by Mike Burt, located at 1580 Grafton Street.

Photo: Stoo Metz Photography



The view of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Grand Parade. Photo: Tourism Nova Scotia

DHBC has been focused on five strategic priorities to better serve Downtown Halifax businesses and organizations:

- **Downtown Mobility** – DHBC advocates for an easily accessible, pedestrian-friendly Downtown Halifax that permits ready access to Downtown businesses.
- **Good Development** – DHBC encourages development that positively impacts Downtown vibrancy and prosperity.
- **Downtown Placemaking** – DHBC champions best practices in Downtown planning, design, management, and utilization of public spaces that inspire continuing and increasing vibrancy in Downtown Halifax.
- **DHBC Leadership** – DHBC is the recognized expert resource and voice of Downtown Halifax – the leader, facilitator, and convener of strategic discourse and communications.
- **Membership Services** – DHBC builds relationships with members, is a resource for problem-solving, and advocates for common issues.

MEMBER PROGRAMS

As a Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) member, you are entitled to the many member programs run by DHBC and we strive to make it easy for you to access them. These programs include (but are not limited to):

- Member communications
- Benefits of the DHBC website
- The Featured Member program
- Social media promotion
- Pedestrian counter data
- Eligibility for event sponsorship
- The use of the Downtown Halifax Welcome Centre space
- Professional development
- Graffiti clean-up program
- DHBC Holiday Party/Open House
- Welcome package and new-business visits
- Main membership survey and key indicators survey
- Neighbourhood Captains program
- Member grant programs

DHBC WEBSITE – DOWNTOWNHALIFAX.CA



Downtownhalifax.ca is the go-to resource for information on all things Downtown. This includes information on retailers, restaurants, entertainment, accommodations, and professional services – just to mention a few. The website is integrated with the member database of Downtown businesses and makes it easy for tourists and locals alike to find out what's going on Downtown and where to find it.

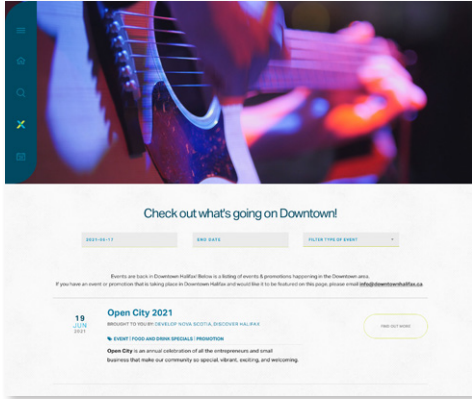
The website provides members with a profile page to present their business and provide information about their location, hours of operation, contacts, events, and much more. Businesses and organizations can upload a logo and cover photo to their "member profile" to promote their products to the public, e.g., food, drink, comic books, sales, special services, promotions, or any information they want the public to be aware of.

Downtownhalifax.ca is also the definitive resource for events happening Downtown. The Downtown Happenings e-newsletter automatically lets our audience know what events are coming up every single week. As you become more familiar with using the website and work it into your daily routine, this tool will enable your information to reach more of the public.

In 2020, the DHBC website became a COVID-19 resource for businesses with the latest information on public health restrictions and guidelines, government business support programs, DHBC COVID-related member grants, and promotions when restrictions eased.

Sign up for a DHBC member account on the website by visiting downtownhalifax.ca/members and clicking on the "Request a DHBC Member Account" tab.

ONLINE CALENDAR



Visit the online calendar on the DHBC website to find out what is happening Downtown. The website is a great resource to showcase member specials, promotions, and events through the online calendar. You and other website visitors can also custom sort by day or event type. And if you tag your business to your event or promotion, it automatically appears on your Member Profile. Here are a few examples of what you might add: percentage off, Burger Week, tax-free all day, free consultation, free tablet when you open an account. What you post to our online calendar will also be shared via DHBC's "Downtown Happenings" e-newsletter that goes out on Mondays and Thursdays. Visit the Member Centre on downtownhalifax.ca/members for "how to" steps.

FEATURED MEMBER



Mimi Fautley, Owner of The Loop Modern Fibre Craft.
Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

Interested in becoming a Downtown Halifax Featured Member? Fill out an "Apply to Be Featured" application form on our website and we will boast and brag about you for several weeks. As a Featured Member, your business or organization will appear on the website's homepage, be shared via social media, and be featured in an issue of the bi-weekly Members Downtown Update and an episode of Downtown Lowdown podcast.

BI-WEEKLY MEMBERS UPDATE & MEMBER COMMUNICATION

DHBC communicates with you, our members, on a regular basis through e-bulletins, notices, event/meeting invitations, bi-weekly updates, and the annual report. If you are not on our mailing list, please sign up by logging into your member account at downtownhalifax.ca to receive updates.

DOWNTOWN HALIFAX WELCOME CENTRE

The DHBC headquarters, located on Barrington Street, is not just an office. It is

a welcome centre where: visitors can come and learn about the urban core; members can meet and interact with staff and one another; members can try out new concepts; and DHBC partners can share their projects.

If you are a DHBC member and would like to use the Downtown Halifax Welcome Centre to showcase your business, host a networking event, or organize a special activity, visit downtownhalifax.ca/storefront to fill out the application form and we will get in touch to help you make it happen. Please note that in-person networking events will be on hold until the Nova Scotia Health Authority deems them safe for small indoor spaces.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CAPTAINS

Neighbourhood Captains are Downtown Halifax business owners and employees located in various geographical areas of Downtown Halifax. Their role is to be local ambassadors of their respective business area or office building who welcome, celebrate, inform, support, and create networks among the organizations and businesses around them. Visit downtownhalifax.ca/members to find out who your Neighbourhood Captain is.

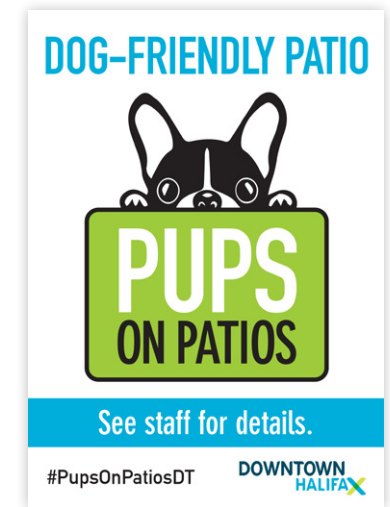
SOCIAL MEDIA

DHBC has a sizeable social media presence, and we use this to the benefit of our members. Visit our social media channels for our regular posts and be sure to "like" and "follow" us and we will do the same. Be sure to also tag us in your posts so we can share your activities and events to our followers.

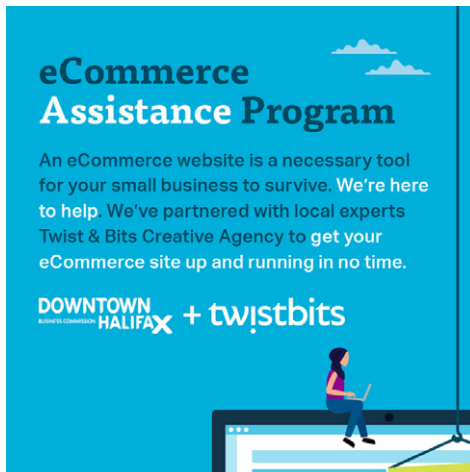
Social media platform handles:

- Facebook: [@DowntownHalifax](https://www.facebook.com/DowntownHalifax)
- Twitter: [@DowntownHalifax](https://twitter.com/DowntownHalifax)
- Instagram: [@DowntownHalifax](https://www.instagram.com/DowntownHalifax)
- LinkedIn: [Downtown Halifax Business Commission](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Downtown-Halifax-Business-Commission)
- YouTube channel: [DHBC1](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

PROMOTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS



DHBC runs several promotions and campaigns throughout the year targeted toward key audiences. Recent programs include: Meet Me Downtown; March Break in Downtown Halifax; Show Your Downtown Love; What's Open in Downtown Halifax (during pandemic lockdowns); Random Acts of Kindness #RAKDTHFX; giveaways on social media; Self-Guided Downtown Art Tour; Downtown Halifax Holiday Gift Guide; Evergreen Festival activations; Patio Season; Pups on Patios; parking campaign; a winter



campaign; and collaborative campaigns with partners including Discover Halifax, Events East, Develop Nova Scotia, and more. As part of these promotions, DHBC can develop materials such as: guides, maps, posters, brochures, videos, window clings, and prize packages. DHBC also develops general branding opportunities for Downtown. As a member, you are able to take part in these initiatives. Be sure to stay connected through the website, downtownhalifax.ca, and our bi-weekly Members Update for updates on promotions and campaigns.

In 2020, two phases of the Open Online Digital Grant were launched to help members create, increase, and enhance their presence online. The first round of the Open Online grant (called the eCommerce Assistance Program) provided financial assistance to those who wanted help improving their e-commerce websites and for those who did not have an e-commerce site at all. The second round provided financial assistance to members that wanted

to continue to improve their online presence and/or develop a marketing strategy for their websites and e-commerce sites. Over 75 grants were awarded to help members adapt to the changing business climate affected by COVID-19.

PARKING INITIATIVES

DHBC is focused on easy enhancements to mitigate the perception of parking problems in Downtown Halifax for the benefit of members and the public. DHBC sometimes offers free parking for special events through either the **HotSpot** mobile app or the on-street parking stations. DHBC also produces a **ParkSmart** webpage, which outlines where to park, the costs, and other tips for easy parking Downtown. ParkSmart can be found on the DHBC website for easy access at downtownhalifax.ca/parksmart. In 2021, DHBC is launching a video campaign to dispel the myth that there is no parking in Downtown Halifax.

PEDESTRIAN COUNTERS

We work to get "feet on the street." In order to measure that success, eight electronic pedestrian counters were installed to monitor the foot traffic in several Downtown Halifax locations. Data is collected from the counters on an ongoing basis and is made available to members and the public. With this information, DHBC can: more accurately monitor trends; capture event attendance; and discover relationships between revenue and visitation.

The counters are located at the following locations: South Barrington Street; North

Barrington Street; Barrington Street, near Sackville Street; Argyle Street; George Street; Lower Water Street South; Upper Water Street North; and Sackville Street. To see how much foot traffic is on your street, visit: downtownhalifax.ca/pedestriancounts.

GRAFFITI CLEAN-UP

If your building has been tagged by graffiti, contact DHBC to have it removed. It's as simple as that. Please note: this program is for privately owned, commercial buildings within the Downtown Halifax boundaries only. To report graffiti, contact: **(902) 423-6658** or info@downtownhalifax.ca.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Downtown Halifax Business Commission conducts a comprehensive online and phone survey every three years to measure attitudes, perceptions, and awareness of Downtown programs and issues. A shorter key-indicators survey is conducted every other year. This information is used to help us better understand our membership and to plan our programs. The latest full membership survey was conducted in early 2021 and highlights from the results can be found throughout this Annual Report. To view the most recent full membership survey in its entirety, visit downtownhalifax.ca/members.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER

The Downtown Happenings e-newsletter goes out on Mondays and Thursdays. This newsletter pulls events happening that

week from our online events calendar and sends it out to those on the subscriber list. As a member, you have the opportunity to add your event/special/promotion to our calendar and have it listed in the newsletter.

To have access to uploading events on the DHBC website, simply create a DHBC member account by visiting downtownhalifax.ca/members and clicking the **"Request a DHBC Member Account"** tab. Contact us if you also need help adding your events to the calendar. To sign up for the newsletter, visit downtownhalifax.ca, scroll to the bottom of the page, and type in your email address.

DOWNTOWN HALIFAX CREW



We are passionate about keeping Downtown Halifax clean and beautiful. DHBC partners with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) on matters of maintenance and beautification of the Downtown core. During the tourist season, from May to September, DHBC summer students maintain and enhance the Downtown area by removing graffiti



X inset – Picking out plants at Audrey Too.
Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

Sophie Lee, Owner of Café Taiyaki 52.
Photo: Michelle Doucette Photography

and posters and painting public items such as garbage cans and lamp posts. The Downtown Halifax Crew also serves as a valuable resource for tourists and visitors looking for directions or recommendations.

EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Downtown Halifax Business Commission offers a limited number of sponsorships for events that contribute to DHBC's strategic goals. We have sponsorship assessment guidelines to establish the best way to financially support events happening in Downtown Halifax. DHBC's Marketing Action Team, comprised of DHBC members, evaluates all sponsorship opportunities against the guidelines. To view the assessment guidelines and application form, visit downtownhalifax.ca/sponsorship.

SEASONAL DECORATIONS

DHBC is responsible for installing and maintaining the holiday wreaths throughout Downtown Halifax during the winter months, as well as seasonal light shows and decorations in Peace and Friendship Park.

In 2020, DHBC launched the Deck the Downtown Grant to provide eligible members with funding to assist them in decorating their windows and storefronts for the holiday season. Close to 50 grants were provided to members to help them attract customers and clients and to increase sales during the pandemic.

In the same vein as the Deck the Downtown Grant, in 2021, DHBC launched the Get Ready for Summer Grant to help restaurants and retail to spruce up their storefronts and

patios. Façade and patio enhancements were intended to help entice customers back to their establishments during the more open phases of the pandemic and to enhance the pedestrian experience in Downtown Halifax.

POSTER KIOSKS

DHBC manages four poster kiosks and nine pole collars for community advertising. This project provides an alternative space for posters in an effort to clean up clutter in the Downtown. DHBC is responsible for kiosk maintenance on the 1st and 15th of every month.

BANNER PROGRAM

DHBC provides banner space on banner poles to promote events and programs that take place in Downtown Halifax. The Halifax Jazz Festival, Royal Nova Scotia International Tattoo, Neptune Theatre, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Children's Wish Foundation, and Scotiabank Blue Nose Marathon have all used the banner program to raise awareness about their events and programs. To inquire about banner space for your event and available locations, contact info@downtownhalifax.ca or (902) 423-6658.

PICNIC TABLES

DHBC has 30 colourfully painted picnic tables throughout Downtown to add animation and seating options, including 10 wheelchair-accessible tables. Picnic tables are located in Peace and Friendship Park, Raymond Taavel Park, Halifax Waterfront next to Bishop's Landing, Argyle Street

between Prince and Sackville Streets, Province House, and Granville Mall.

GRITTY TO PRETTY PLACEMAKING GRANTS

DHBC's Gritty to Pretty Placemaking grants are for individuals and businesses seeking funding to improve areas of Downtown Halifax. Gritty to Pretty includes three grants: Open Grant, Façade Lighting Grant, and Mural Grant. While beneficial to the entire Downtown, the grants allow citizens to take charge of their district, gets people involved in beautifying their neighbourhoods, and helps DHBC better understand what people want to see improved in Downtown Halifax.

To view more examples of past successful Gritty to Pretty projects and to download the application forms, go to downtownhalifax.ca/grittytopretty.

NAVIGATOR STREET OUTREACH

Navigator Street Outreach (NSO) offers direct support to homeless and street-involved individuals on the streets of Downtown Halifax. The initiative, entering its 14th year, is a partnership between DHBC and Spring Garden Area Business Association and also receives funding from HRM. From April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, the Navigator connected with 241 individuals across Halifax Regional Municipality who fell within the designated service population. Navigator Street Outreach is but one essential component of a comprehensive strategy to end homelessness in our community.

2021 Membership Survey

69% of Members rate
DHBC's effectiveness on
a scale of 1-5 as 4 or 5.

For more information, contact Eric Jonsson, Navigator Street Outreach Program Coordinator, at eric@downtownhalifax.ca or (902) 209-6517.

MAIN STREET TAX PLAN

The current municipal tax system is unfairly weighted against our city's Downtown and main streets. Working with the other business improvement districts (BIDs), we have proposed a framework for a new commercial tax plan, which will reduce the unfair levels of taxation to the city's traditional main streets, and act as a disincentive for continued commercial sprawl to business parks.

COGSWELL DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT

In 2018-2019, 27 organizations worked together to facilitate discussions around the redevelopment of the Cogswell District to ensure that Halifax advances with the best overall urban design vision possible for the project, through a robust public design process. The Gehl report is available for

download at downtownhalifax.ca/cogswell.

The Cogswell Interchange is scheduled for demolition fall 2021. DHBC will work closely with HRM communications to ensure that members will receive up-to-date information and notices during demolition and construction.

TRANSIT STRATEGY

An effective intramodal and intermodal transit system is vital for a thriving downtown. In 2013, Metro Transit undertook public participation and announced that they were undertaking a two-year overhaul of their system. In March 2016, the Halifax Transit Moving Forward Together plan, a five-year service plan, was approved by HRM Council. DHBC is currently an engaged member of Leading With Transit, an advocacy group dedicated to transit system improvements.

DOWNTOWN PARKING

The axiom that, "every successful downtown has a parking problem," is very true. Whether it is a perception that there is no parking or the annoyance of paying for it, this will be an ongoing challenge for Downtown Halifax. DHBC is focused on the following: work with HRM to more nimbly implement their Downtown parking strategy; promote the ability to pay multiple ways for on-street parking; increase awareness of the availability of existing parking through signage and information, and elevate awareness of best practice parking solutions that have proven to work effectively in other cities.

TUNES AT NOON AND DOWNTOWN HALIFAX LIVE

Tunes at Noon is a free summer music series brought to you by DHBC in collaboration with partners such as Develop Nova Scotia, Music Nova Scotia, the African Nova Scotian Music Association, Youth Arts Connection, and The Coast. In 2020, to comply with COVID-19 provincial public health restrictions, Tunes at Noon went virtual with two grants available to DHBC Members, under the Downtown Halifax Live program. One grant was for three concerts that were live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and the other grant was provided to 17 businesses that put on over 30 live shows in their establishments, while adhering to public health guidelines.

In 2021, Tunes at Noon will be taking place in-person once again on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays in July and August. This year, the shows will take place on the Salt Yard Stage at the Halifax Waterfront, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm. For more information, visit downtownhalifax.ca/tunes.

CLEAN SWEEP

Every spring, DHBC fills Downtown Halifax with over 170 volunteers from over 20 corporate offices to sweep the streets for the Annual Clean Sweep. The event also serves as an official kick-off for DHBC's Downtown Halifax Crew, a team of students that provide tourist information and keep Downtown Halifax clean throughout the spring and summer. It is a great opportunity for our members to get outside and engage with one another while working towards a



Enjoying the Holiday light display at Peace and Friendship Park. Photo: Stoo Metz Photography

common goal – keeping Downtown Halifax clean and litter-free. Unfortunately, this event was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 gathering limits. We hope for its return in 2022.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

In 2020, DHBC was a partner in the Evergreen Festival, a holiday event and promotion spearheaded by Develop Nova Scotia and Discover Halifax. DHBC built on their program with a spectacular light show in Peace and Friendship Park throughout the winter months and promotion of members' sales, food specials, and holiday offerings. To see more about the Evergreen Festival, visit evergreenfestns.com.

ART OF CITY BUILDING CONFERENCE

DHBC has been an active partner of the Art of City Building (AoCB) since its inception in 2018. AoCB is an annual conference designed to inspire conversations around people, design, and placemaking. With a different focus each year, past themes



Obladee, A Wine Bar. Photo: Dashboard Living



"Triangulum" by Duncan Armour, located inside a transit shelter on Barrington Street. Photo: Stoo Metz Photography



Strolling on the Halifax Waterfront boardwalk. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

include: "Moving People," which focused on many aspects of mobility; "Our Place," which explored the future of Halifax and our ability to achieve broad community development objectives; and "Under Water" that explored balancing economic growth and social inclusion with environmental regeneration. In 2020, the conference was offered virtually due to the pandemic. For more information, visit artofcitybuilding.ca.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

The idea of an organization devoted to serving a particular business improvement district (BID) is a very simple one: businesses in a defined area, typically a downtown or commercial main street, hold a vote and agree to create a special levy, which is added to their commercial taxes. This levy goes to a specific organization with a mandate to do marketing, events, advocacy, placemaking, networking, and undertake other projects of common interest. The very first BID in the world was created on Bloor Street, Toronto, in 1970. In the 51 years since, hundreds of BIDs have formed in Canada, thousands in the United States, and many more around the world.

DHBC FUNDING

Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) was established through a vote of the businesses in the Downtown in 1987. Once created by vote, the levy is mandatory. It is charged to all commercial property owners, identified as a separate line item on their municipal tax bill (which consists of eight different rates). Landlords typically then charge this proportionately to their tenants. Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) collects the levy and remits it to DHBC.

DHBC is led by a Board of Directors, consisting of members who are elected to their positions at the annual meeting each June. The Board creates an annual budget and sets the appropriate levy amount to fund it. This amount then needs to be approved by HRM Council, as part of their annual budget process.

2021 Membership Survey

70% are aware they are DHBC Members compared to 63% in 2016.

(Note: Membership is automatic when a business or organization is located within DHBC's geographic boundaries.)

Last year, the BID levy represented 78% of our total revenues for the organization. This year's BID levy has been maintained at \$0.091 per \$100 of assessment.

DHBC always seeks to provide excellent value for members. Whether you are a large multi-tenant landlord paying tens of thousands of dollars, or a small business paying several hundred dollars, we are happy to meet with you to discuss the return on investment you are getting from your DHBC membership.



Kathryn Harding, Sommelier and Retail Manager of Bishop's Cellar. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

REVENUE

Members Levy	\$1,290,515
Advocacy	\$124,418
Placemaking	\$193,776
Communications & Marketing	\$3,155
Member Engagement	\$0
Administrative	\$18,575

Carry forward from reserves	\$196,636
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TOTAL REVENUE \$1,827,075



Shopping at Drala Books & Gifts. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

OPERATING EXPENSES

Advocacy	\$233,615
Placemaking	\$439,790
Communications & Marketing	\$384,862
Member Engagement	\$84,871
Administrative	\$683,937

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$1,827,075

SURPLUS (DEFICIT) \$(0)

2021
Membership Survey

76% of Members feel that DHBC is an effective and knowledgeable voice to represent the interests of Downtown.

All photos in this document were taken while following the directives of the Nova Scotia Health Authority and adhering to provincial COVID-19 restrictions.



Oysters at Gahan House. Photo: Discover Halifax



Books on display at Venus Envy. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging

DOWNTOWN
BUSINESS COMMISSION **HALIFAX**



Browsing at Lisa Drader-Murphy. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging



Clockwise: *Valentina Ouyanova, Manager of Maps & More: The Travel Store.* Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging
Mary Nkrumah, Chef and Owner Mary's African Cuisine. Photo: Michelle Doucette Photography
Knitwear at Northern Watters. Photo: Chris Geworsky Imaging
Dumplings at Kyo Ramen & Bar. Photo: Dashboard Living

DOWNTOWN HALIFAX BUSINESS COMMISSION

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