



# Downtown Ithaca Annual Report 2019



[www.downtownithaca.com](http://www.downtownithaca.com)



# WHO WE ARE:

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA) is a comprehensive downtown revitalization and management program engaged in five principal areas:

- Business Retention & Development
- Special Events
- Marketing & Membership Services
- Government Relations & Infrastructure
- Transportation

# OUR VISION:

Downtown Ithaca is the economic, social, and cultural heart of Tompkins County. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance will strive to preserve and develop the central downtown core as the region's center for banking and finance, business and professional offices, government and community services, downtown residences, and as a retail destination highlighted by unique specialty shops, restaurants, arts and entertainment. Downtown serves people who live and work downtown, city and county residents, college communities, area visitors and tourists.

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# Dear Downtown stakeholders:

We are pleased to provide you with the 2019 Annual Report of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA). As Ithaca's downtown business improvement district, it is our job to focus energy and resources on managing, promoting, developing, and revitalizing Ithaca's urban core. Each day, we work with our partners to make Downtown a better place to visit, to live, and to work. As the hub of our metropolitan area, Downtown Ithaca is a center for commerce, arts and entertainment, lodging and hospitality, nonprofit enterprise, government, and has become one of the region's fastest growing residential neighborhoods.

The 2019 year was a time of transformation. We added the 192 unit City Centre project, developed by Newman Development. We opened the 110,000 SF Tompkins Financial Center project, the new home to Tompkins Financial. We celebrated the renovation and opening of The Bank Tower at 202 The Commons, the new headquarters home to CFCU. We also opened the Canopy by Hilton boutique hotel, adding another 130 rooms to the marketplace.

It was also a year of planning and preparation. Two major projects totalling over \$200 million in new investment are planned for the Green Garage site. The old garage will be rebuilt, a landmark community conference center built and some 400 units of affordable and market rate housing will be added to the landscape.

Throughout 2019 work continued on the 2030 Downtown Strategic Plan. This work is being done in conjunction with the City of Ithaca and will serve as the official Downtown/West End sub-area comprehensive plan.

Each year, the DIA prepares a work plan with 100-plus work tasks, projects, and programs, all designed to improve the health and vitality of Downtown. In 2019, we helped our community secure \$5.0 million in grant funding for the conference center project and launched our \$465,000 NY DEC transportation demand management project.

As we go to print, Downtown Ithaca, like our entire community, region, and nation, is confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing commerce to a halt and emptying our otherwise dynamic and vibrant downtown core. We are working with our partners to help us all weather this disaster and to plan for our eventual re-opening and recovery.

We work hard to leverage BID dollars so that Downtown stakeholders can reap maximum return on their investment in the DIA. We are proud and honored to work on your behalf. We will rebuild, we will recover and we look forward to relaunching one of America's most dynamic small city downtowns.

In gratitude,

**Steve Headrick**

President, Board of Directors

**Gary Ferguson**

Executive Director



# BUSINESS RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

## DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Ithaca continues to be a bright light in the upstate New York landscape, led by the our Downtown district and its existing and planned businesses and development. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance serves as a facilitator for this growth and development and helps to ensure that our businesses can thrive and grow.



## THREE MAJOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2019

- **Canopy by Hilton Hotel**
- **202 The Commons Bank Building renovation**
- **City Centre residential and commercial project**

Together, these projects represented nearly \$90 million in new investment and delivered 75,000 SF of new office space, 132 new hotel rooms, 15,000 SF of new commercial and retail space, and 192 new residential units to our Downtown. That is quite a year!

Our Downtown businesses have worked hard to adapt to the new national retail environment. Downtown welcomes an incredible class of new businesses seeking to add value and success to the downtown marketplace.

2020 has brought the onslaught of COVID-19, which has quieted our streets and temporarily shut down many of our businesses. Nonessential office workers are basing their jobs out of their home. A large number of restaurants are working to provide take out and delivery service to our shuttered populace. Retailers are working to sell online and provide curbside pickup. The full dimension of this economic shutdown has yet to be determined, but know that the Downtown Ithaca Alliance will be there to help our businesses and our community rebuild, reopen, and reach for the future.

## DOWNTOWN GROWTH BY NUMBERS

Combined these three projects add:

**\$90 million of total new investment**

**90,000 total SF of new space**

**75,000 total SF of new office space**

**15,000 total SF of new retail space**

**192 total units of new housing**

**132 total new hotel rooms**

## CURRENT PROJECTS HAROLD'S SQUARE

Located at the heart of downtown on the 100 block of the Commons pedestrian mall, Harold's Square will change downtown in multiple ways. This mixed-use project adds new retail space to the Commons, preserving the scale of existing buildings. On the Green Street side, the project adds a twelve-story residential tower, delivering high-end housing units to the core of the community. Also, Harold's Square offers much needed office space at a convenient location. The project is complex and the construction parameters are demanding. McGuire Development, L Enterprises LLC and LaChase Construction are working closely with the City to assure that commerce proceeds normally as this major project nears completion.

**\$42 million total new investment**

**180,000 SF total new space**

**17,000 SF new retail space**

**53,000 SF new office space**

**78 new housing units**

## VECINO ASTERI

The redevelopment of the western two thirds of the Green Street garage site is being led by the Vecino Group, a Missouri-based national affordable housing developer. Vecino was selected by the City of Ithaca to redevelop the garage site and is currently in site plan review. Its \$112 Million project is expected to break ground in early 2021. The Asteri project consists of three major components:

- **218 units of affordable housing**
- **rebuilt new 350 car parking garage**
- **50,000 SF community conference center**

The project will help transform Green Street into a major urban thoroughfare, bringing new life and vitality to the center. Completion is scheduled for spring 2023.

## DOWNTOWN ITHACA COMMUNITY CONFERENCE CENTER

Part of the Vecino project is a two-story, 50,000 SF community conference center. This \$34 Million project will feature a 12,300 SF ballroom, a junior ballroom and breakout rooms, pre-function and trade show space, and a full production kitchen. The project received \$5.0 million in grant funding from the State of New York (Empire State Development) and is being funded with room/lodging tax revenue from across the City. Financing support comes from the City of Ithaca, with help from the Downtown Ithaca Alliance, Tompkins County, and downtown hotels (aided by the Chamber of Commerce Foundation).

## RIMLAND PROJECT

The eastern third of the Green Street garage site is being redeveloped by developer Jeffrey Rimland. Currently in site plan review, this \$40 million project will create 200 units of new housing plus 150 new parking spaces. The project will also improve office and retail space in the attached Rothschild (sp) building. Groundbreaking for this project is scheduled for the 2020 year end.

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### CANOPY HOTEL BY HILTON

Downtown's fourth major hotel was completed toward the tail end of 2019, thanks to the dedication and hard work of developer Neil Patel, who brought this project to Ithaca. This one-of-a-kind boutique hotel is one of 11 Canopy projects worldwide, with all other locations in major markets around the globe. The Canopy features 132 rooms, the cozy The Strand Cafe, and a distinctive local flavor.

**\$30 million total new investment**

**74,475 SF total new space**

**125 new hotel rooms**

**5,000 SF Office Space**

**5,000 SF Retail Space**

### CITY CENTRE:

Located directly east of the Commons, City Centre is one of the largest projects to be constructed in Ithaca. Occupying the entire block bounded by Green Street, Aurora Street, and East State/MLK Street, the project created a new retail ground floor space, further expanding retail activity on the 300 East State block. The project features 192 units of market rate housing, adding to the variety of downtown residential living. The project also includes a 71-car below-grade parking garage for tenants. Newman Development kept this project on schedule and it opened in the summer of 2019.

**\$40 million total new investment**

**150,000 SF total new space**

**12,000 SF new retail space**

**192 new housing units**

### MORE PROJECTS

There are several other Downtown development projects that were being developed, as well.

#### 117 NORTH CAYUGA:

The former Masonic Temple (now known as 117 N. Cayuga) underwent extensive interior and exterior renovations. It received a new elevator, roof repair, updated wiring, plumbing and heating, and new windows. The project produced a fully leasable space that conforms to Federal historic preservation standards.

### TOMPKINS CENTER FOR HISTORY & CULTURE:

A new Downtown heritage and visitor center, the Tompkins Center for History and Culture officially opened its doors to the public in the summer this past year. The Center is home to the History Center, the Downtown Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau's Visitors Center, the Community Arts Partnership (CAP), and the Dorothy Cotton Institute. This new center is a vibrant cultural destination that delivers engaging multimedia exhibits and programs about local and regional history, monthly Gallery Night Exhibits and more.

#### 100 WEST:

The block to the immediate west of the Commons is the subject of a major revitalization initiative undertaken by Urban Core, LLC. Three buildings: 121 West State, 123 West State, and 108/114 West Green were renovated. The West Green site, completed in early 2019, is now Press Bay Court, a home to a group of micro retail businesses that complement the neighboring Press Bay Alley.

# RETAIL SUPPORT & BUSINESS RETENTION

Throughout 2019, the DIA worked to support downtown businesses through a number of different business outreach activities and marketing promotions.



## TECHNICAL SUPPORT & OUTREACH

In 2019, we offered targeted technical support by meeting one on one with at least two dozen businesses for in-depth discussions on marketing, management, succession planning, and operational concerns.

## RETAIL MICROGRANT - C.R.E.G.:

The Collaborative Retail Experience Grant is a new initiative we launched in 2020 to encourage, support, and promote unique activities in ground-level businesses with the intent to generate more presence inside downtown retail spaces. In 2019, the groundwork of the program was established. The overview and guidelines, examples of qualifying applications, application and it's process, scoring criteria, and follow up event report to be submitted were created and vetted.

## WEBINARS

We organized and hosted three webinars for downtown businesses. They included a retail panel to help merchants prepare for festivals, a parking webinar with former City of Ithaca parking director, and a webinar to help merchants learn more about the Small Business Development Center as local business resource.

## PARTNERSHIP

We once again partnered with the Tompkins County Convention and Visitor Bureau on the February 2020 Winter Recess teacher attraction promotion that featured spectacular deals on dining, shopping and services.

## NETWORKING

Merchant Appreciation Night networking events were held at various downtown locations throughout the year and attended by interested retail and commercial businesses.

## FACES OF DOWNTOWN

We worked with nearly three dozen businesses to help them create a profile for our campaign dubbed Faces of Downtown which we feature on our website and social media. We will continue to showcase our downtown businesses and entrepreneurs throughout 2020.

## VISITATIONS & OUTREACH

Each year, the DIA seeks to visit with downtown businesses to learn about their concerns, issues, and opportunities. In 2019, we hired a Business Outreach Coordinator, Kristina Thelen, to boost these efforts.





## PEDESTRIAN COUNTERS

In 2018, Downtown Ithaca Alliance installed two pedestrian counters by MotionLoft at Trolley Circle on the Ithaca Commons and two more in 2019 at the Commons Aurora St. gateway. The cameras were installed in early July to help study the restaurant, evening economy, and late-night behavior. Near the end of 2019, we learned MotionLoft would be shuttering at the beginning of 2020. Working quickly, Downtown Ithaca staff found a comparable service through Spring-board who have been operating for over 11 years and originated in the UK, but have multiple regional headquarters throughout the US. Working with Spring-board, in mid-march 2020, Downtown Ithaca installed 4 devices to track foot traffic--2 at Trolley Circle, 1 at Aurora St. and 1 at Cayuga St. Monthly reports are provided at BRD and Board meetings and additionally by request from downtown stakeholders. For data reports, please email: [allison@downtownithaca.com](mailto:allison@downtownithaca.com)

## 2019 PEDESTRIAN COUNTER REPORTS

### TROLLEY CIRCLE: JAN. 1, 2019 - DEC. 31, 2019

**2,982,733** combined foot traffic

Eastbound toward Aurora St., Westbound toward Cayuga St. & Seneca St.

### RESTAURANT ROW: JUNE 28, 2019 - DEC. 31, 2019

**780,182** combined foot traffic

Eastbound Toward Cornell Campus, Westbound toward Trolley Circle





# NEW BUSINESSES IN 2019

This past year was a period of substantial growth and investment in our small business sector. The addition of these 26 new and expanded businesses has contributed to some of our lowest office and retail vacancy rates on record as well as the continued revitalization and diversification of our community's central commercial hub.



## New Downtown Ithaca Businesses in 2019

**Adrina Dietra**  
118 W Green St, unit 3

**Angelheart Diner**  
401 E. State St.

**Bike Bar Ithaca**  
314 E State St.

**Bousquet Holstein**  
121 E. Seneca St.

**Canopy By Hilton**  
324 E. State St.

**CFCU Community Credit Union Transformation Center**  
202 The Commons

**Chase Bank**  
301 E. State St.

**Cobblers Cottage**  
150 The Commons

**Equus Advisors Accounting Firm**  
171 The Commons., Suite 3

**Gateway Mediterrean Grill**  
401 E. State St.

**Halal Meat and Grocery**  
110 W. Green St.

**Hair Color Art**  
112 W. Green St.  
**IthacaSews**  
112 N Cayuga St.

**Lot 10 & Let It Slide**  
106 S. Cayuga St.

**Lucky Hare Brewing**  
118 W. Green St., unit 6

**Mama Said Hand Pies**  
118 W. Green St.

**Mane & Wigs**  
109 S. Cayuga St.

**Nothing Nowhere Cafe**  
215 E. State St.

**Nowhere Special Libations**  
114 W. State St.

**One Ring Donuts**  
114 W. Green St.

**Our Remedies**  
208A The Commons

**The Bloomwell**  
111 W. State St.

**The Brain Shoppe**  
210 The Commons

**The Foundry**  
416 E State St.

**The Strand Cafe**  
115 Seneca Way

**Your CBD Store**  
308 E. Seneca St.

## NEW LOCATIONS

A couple of existing downtown businesses moved to new downtown addresses in 2019.

**Collegetown Bagels**  
301 E. State St.

**Comics for Collectors**  
124 W. State St.

# Special Events

In 2019, Downtown Ithaca organized large festivals, concerts, and smaller events throughout the year, continuing to build on our downtown's reputation as a destination for enjoyable, community-focused events.



## ITHACA FESTIVAL SPRING CRAFT FAIR

Downtown Ithaca continued its long-standing partnership with the Ithaca Festival, operating the Spring Festival Craft Fair. In 2019, the event featured both local and traveling artists and crafters over three days. 90 vendors offered handcrafted, unique items, including jewelry, home goods, artwork, clothing, and more to the event's 47,000 visitors..



## CFCU SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

This year's concert series featured 12 concerts over a 12-week period, including a variety of musical styles from funk to reggae, hip-hop to indie rock, and both national and touring acts. The concerts drew an estimated 48,000 people throughout the series. Each performance took place on the Bernie Milton Pavilion. The final show of the season featured popular band Maddy Walsh and the Blind Spots.

CFCU returned this year as the concert series' presenting sponsor, with additional support by Seneca Beverage Corporation, the Ithaca Marriott Downtown, Wagner Vineyards, Cayuga Radio Group, Maguire Family of Dealerships, and Cornell University Community Relations. The Range supported as a rain location, for 2 of the concerts



## DOWNTOWN EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION WEEK

Downtown Ithaca celebrated the over 3,000 employees of retail establishments, restaurants, offices, and more over five days in July. Participants received discounts and giveaways throughout the week using their Employee Discount Cards. The highlight of the week was the popular Downtown Olympics, pitting businesses and organizations against one another in fun and silly sports to see who would emerge victorious.



## APPLE HARVEST FESTIVAL

Drawing approximately 70,000 people, the 37th annual Apple Harvest Festival included over 100 vendors and apples in a variety of delicious forms, including cider, pie, donuts, and more. Live performances, including music, dance, and educational programming, entertained the crowds during the festival's three days. Visitors played games, rode rides, and shopped at the craft fair. The Family Fun Zone featured activities for all ages inside Center Ithaca.

The Apple Harvest Festival has been supported by Tompkins Trust Company for over 10 years.



## HALLOWEEN

The annual parade led costumed children and their families from the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC) to the Commons, where trick or treating was available at over 40 participating stores. The event also featured free face painting, a balloon artist, games, chili, and cider inside of Center Ithaca..





## SANTA'S ARRIVAL

Santa and his elves arrived in Downtown Ithaca in their trademark unique style, by repelling off the Center Ithaca building and onto the Commons at Trolley Circle! The arrival was preceded by a dance performance by The Next Jennaration, caroling by the CSMA children's choir, and live music from Ithaca's own Fall Creek Brass Band. After Santa's big jump, he headed to his sleigh on the Bernie Milton Pavilion, along with Sparky the Unicorn to take free photos with all the good little girls and boys. Ithaca Talent Education musicians played holiday music inside Center Ithaca while families warmed up.



## WINTER LIGHT FESTIVAL & CHOWDER COOK-OFF

Winter Light Festival presented by Tompkins Trust Company made its debut in 2019 as a replacement for the Ice Festival.

This pilot was an experimental test of various ideas and activities: an international light exhibit (Prismatica by Raw Designs), local light displays (Sparky the Unicorn, etc.), a free community Silent Disco featuring 3 DJs, a lightsaber exhibition and tournament, the Chowder Cook-Off, Santa's arrival, a light parade, and other activities.

Some components worked better than others.

While we had to cancel the culminating event, Let's Glow Ithaca — a light parade and the festival's closing event — due to inclement weather, the overall festival was deemed a success worthy of continuation and enhancement.

The 10th annual Chowder Cook-off continued to take place and happened during the Winter Light Festival. It featured 30 restaurants competing for the title of best chowder, which was ultimately taken home by Luna Street Food which walked away with the Best Seafood Chowder. Simeons American Bistro won the honor for Best Traditional Chowder. The Best Veggie Chowder title was awarded to Ithaca Soy. Last, but certainly not least, in the Best Meat Chowder category, the title went to McCormick's at Moakley House.

Winter Light Festival and the Chowder Cook-off were supported by the Tompkins County Tourism Program, the Hilton Garden Inn, City Centre Apartments, and Maguire Family of Dealerships.



**CHILI COOK-OFF** The annual Chili Cook-Off celebrated its 22nd year on February 8, 2020. The frigid cold temperatures did not daunt the estimated 12,000 attendees who came to sample chili, as well as beer, wine, and other offerings from over 40 restaurants. The Ithaca Beard & Mustache Club hosted their popular annual competitions to determine who should earn the trophies for most stylish facial hair. Volunteers offered hot cocoa with a variety of toppings available. The 22nd annual Chili Cook-Off was presented by Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis.

This year's Chili Cook-Off winners, selected by a panel of judges: Ithaca Ale House won Best Meat Chili award, Viva Taqueria won Best Vegetarian/Vegan Chili, Cayuga Medical Center was awarded Best Chili Inspired Food, and Finger Lakes Cider House won Best Beverage. The crowd voted by ballot and the winner of the People's Choice award for chili was Taverna Banfi, with Luna Inspired Street Food winning Best Presentation.



## GALLERY NIGHT

On the first Friday of each month, galleries, shops, restaurants, and other locations open their doors to share artwork created by a variety of local and regional artists. The walking tour continues to grow and attract more visitors to downtown. Gallery Night is presented by Tompkins Trust Company and supported in part by the Community Arts Partnership.

## MARKETING

In 2019, Downtown Ithaca organized several promotions designed to encourage shopping, dining and general awareness of the downtown core as an attraction in the county and region. The promotions ran at strategic times in the year to help bring residents, students, and visitors to downtown.

## 2019 PROMOTIONS

### WINTER RECESS

Winter Recess is a direct-marketing initiative in partnership with the Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce to promote visiting or staying in Ithaca to K-12 teachers and staff in the New York public school system during their February winter break. For over 10 years now, Winter Recess has continued to be an effective promotion to help businesses in downtown during an especially slow time in business and tourism.

### WINTER & SUMMER SALE

Downtown Ithaca organizes and promotes a Winter sale happening at the end of January and a Summer sale at the end of July. Participating retailers in the district offer discounts on seasonal apparel and merchandise ranging from 10-50% off.

### SPRING FASHION NIGHT

In 2019, we held our 2nd Annual Spring Fashion Week, a week-long promotion to highlight downtown Ithaca's robust selection of fashion from our independent retailers and local designers. The week featured window displays and pop-up activities in shops and businesses throughout downtown and concluded with a fashion show at the Center It haca. The week-long promotion attracted roughly 500-800 young professionals and college-age students.

### BITE OF ITHACA

Held the last week of June, this 4th annual dining promotion featured \$5 "bites" of tasty eats — appetizers, tapas, desserts, drinks, and petite versions of popular menu items at more than 20 establishments around Tompkins County. Throughout the week, patrons journeyed through cuisine, visiting any number of different establishments over the day/evening. Bite of Ithaca was made possible in part by a grant from the Tompkins County Tourism Program.

### WELCOME STUDENT WEEKEND

Downtown Ithaca once again welcomed new and returning students from Cornell University, Ithaca College, and Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) to downtown for the 4th Annual Welcome Student Weekend. With the partnership of Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) students rode the bus from campus to downtown for an afternoon during Labor Day weekend, with Cornell University attending on Saturday and Ithaca College and Tompkins Community College on Sunday. Roughly 5,000 students turned out over the weekend, learning how to ride the TCAT bus to and from their campus, discovering the diverse shopping, dining and services downtown offers through a district-wide scavenger hunt, and taking in performances by many musicians and dancers from university dance and music groups. Performers and entertainment included the Big Red Marching Band and WICB on their respective university day.

### GREENLIGHT A VET

To celebrate Veterans Day and honor military veterans and their families, Downtown Ithaca collaborated with the City to participate in the national Greenlight a Vet campaign from November 10 through 12. For the campaign, the City of Ithaca donated 100 battery-operated flickering little tea lights to the businesses on and around the Commons so they could light up their storefront window displays with a green glow.

Many downtown shops and businesses showed their support, too, by changing at least one light at their business or residence to green.

Greenlight A Vet was launched as an advocacy program in 2015 by Walmart under its Veterans Welcome Home Commitment program that aims to hire 250,000 veterans by 2020. The national retailer created Greenlight a Vet with the intent of drawing attention to the professional and personal struggles many veterans face after their military service ends.

### SHIFT YOUR SHOPPING WEEKEND — PLAID FRIDAY, SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY & CIDER MONDAY

Downtown Ithaca once again partnered with Local First to kick off the holiday season with Shift Your Shopping Weekend, three fun themed shopping days where many of downtown's locally owned and operated specialty shops and businesses offered special deals, contests, activities, demonstrations, cider tastings, and more to their customers.

Shift Your Shopping started the day after Thanksgiving with Plaid Friday, a celebration of downtown's diverse and creative local and independent businesses which also served as a reminder to shoppers to show their support for downtown's business owners who rely on those dollars to continue to provide their goods and services to the community.

During Plaid Friday, we hosted a raffle where the prize winner received a bunch of goodies from local retailers. The raffle garnered 213 entries from 22 participating raffle locations. We also set up a selfie station in Dewitt Mall to encourage people to visit the shopping center to photograph themselves in their plaid wears.

Our merchants reported higher than average sales on Plaid Friday. Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate for the rest of the weekend which seemed to hurt sales the following days for Small Business Saturday. And, unfortunately, the extremely bad winter weather forced us to cancel our 3rd Annual Cider Monday, an indie alternative to Cyber Monday.



# DOWNTOWNITHACA.COM

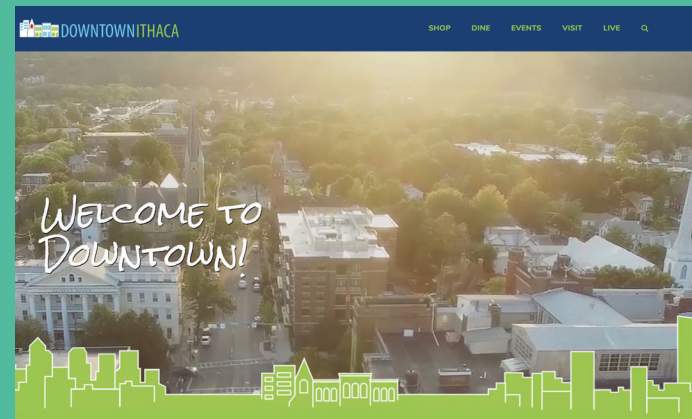
Downtownithaca.com still continues to maintain strength in the community as a resource of information in the community. The most popular page that outpaces everything else is still the apple harvest festival event page, followed by the landing (home) page, and the shopping & dining directory navigation.

## JAN. '19 - MAR '20 ANALYTICS:

**TOTAL NEW & RETURNING USERS:** 114,221

**TOTAL PAGE VIEWS:** 263,241

**TOP REFERRALS:** Facebook Event Pages, VisitIthaca.com, Fingerlakes.org, Ithacavoices.com, NewYorkUpstate.com, and IloveNY.com



## GIFT CARDS

Considered the most versatile card in the area, it is accepted at over 100 downtown locations and works just like a prepaid Visa or MasterCard gift card. The Downtown Ithaca gift card provides customers with a large variety of shopping and dining options in the district and more importantly keep store purchases local and retains more tax dollars in the community. The DIA maintains the gift card program at no cost to downtown businesses. From April 2017 - March 2018, Downtown Ithaca sold 1,066 gift cards amounting to over \$59,000 dollars, a considerable growth from the previous year.

2018



**April 2018 -  
March 2019**

**Gift cards  
sold: 1,107**

**Dollars  
kept local:  
\$59,600.00**

2019



**April 2019 -  
March 2020**

**Gift cards  
sold: 1,126**

**Dollars  
kept local:  
\$58,000.00**

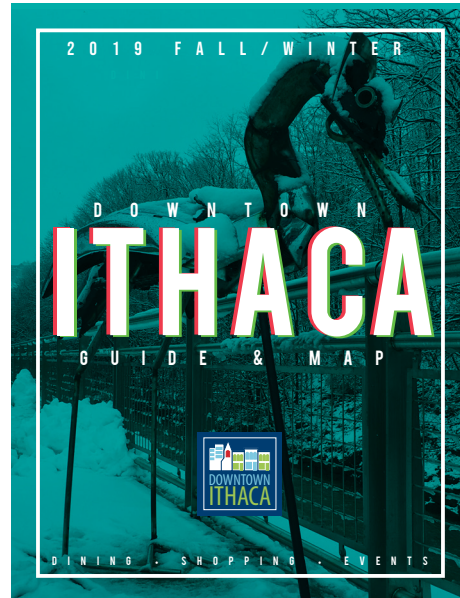
# Communications

## E-NEWS AND MEMBER MAIL

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance distributes a weekly email newsletter with events, member business announcements, and promotions happening in Downtown Ithaca. The E-News sends weekly to over 5,000 people, including business and property owners, residents, offices, and event attendees who subscribe to the newsletter. Additionally, the DIA emails Quarterly member mail newsletters geared toward BID stakeholders, merchants and restaurants, updating them on important downtown news.

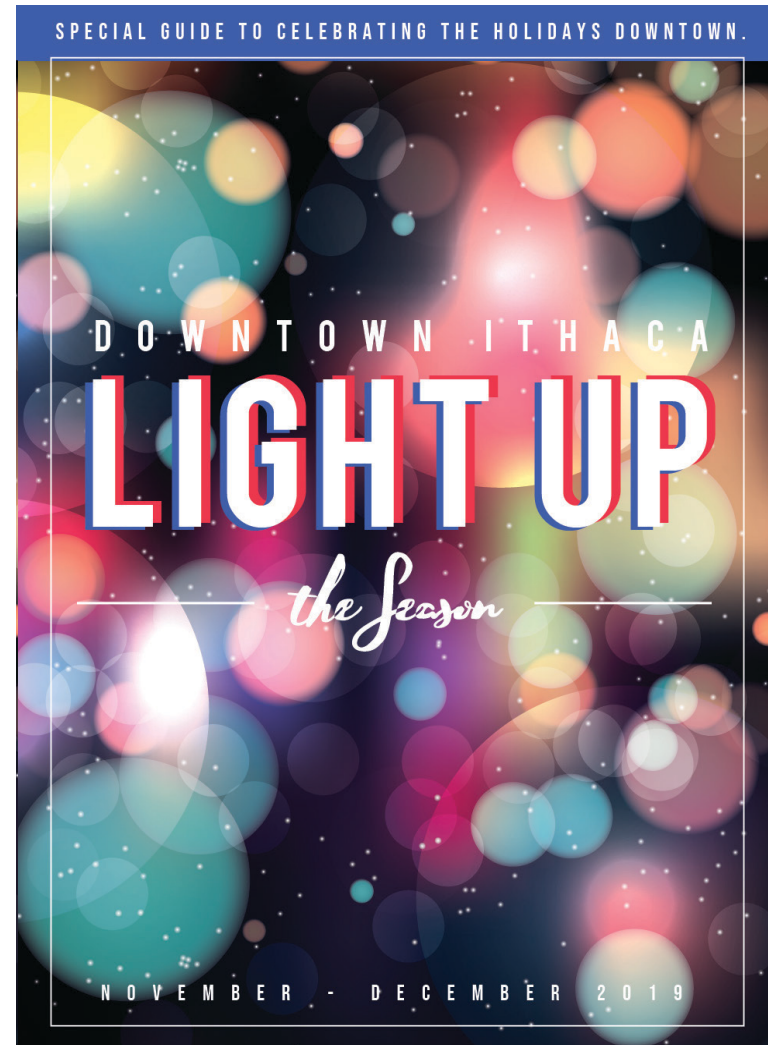
## BI-ANNUAL SEASONAL GUIDES

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance produces a Seasonal Guide twice each year. The issues come out just around the turn between warmer and cooler seasons — Spring/Summer, Winter/Fall. The guide varies in page length and contains an area map, dates for special events, and a directory of downtown retail stores, restaurants, lodging, and services. Additionally, the seasonal guides help tourists and residents find a restaurant for all tastes and occasions, information on parking, attractions, and more. In 2019, the DIA circulated over 50,000 guides to businesses, colleges, restaurants, and hotels.



## HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE INSERT

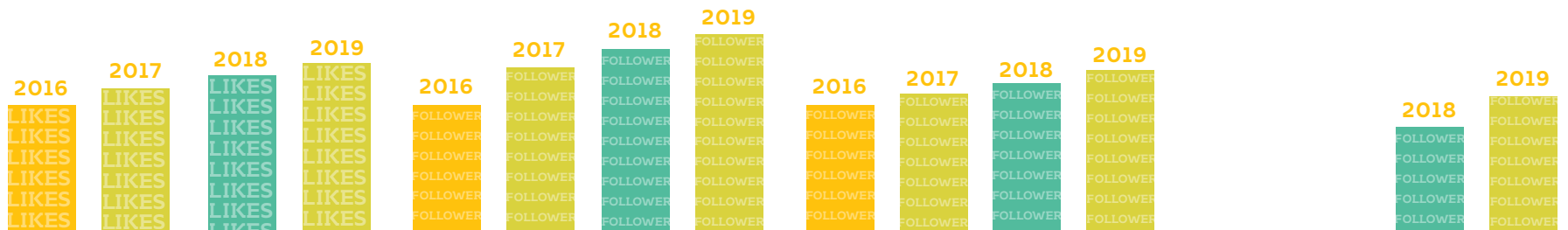
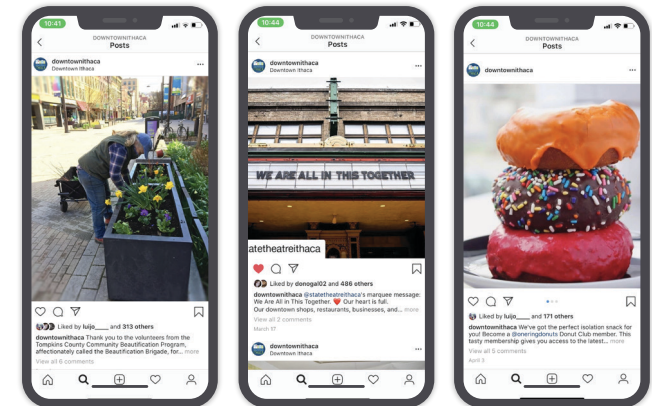
New in 2019, we introduced a holiday gift guide insert. This holiday insert was jammed packed with holiday shopping deals, special events, gift ideas, and more for visitors and locals to enjoy during the holiday season







Downtown Ithaca utilizes key social media outlets to market to residents, students and visitors. It also provides valuable insight about how people engage with our downtown. Of all the social media accessible, Downtown Ithaca uses Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and occasionally SnapChat to reach a variety of audiences.



2019: 21,619 | +4.8%  
2018: 20,632 likes  
2017: 19,817 likes  
2016: 18,938 likes



2019: 8,998 | +19%  
2018: 7,582 followers  
2017: 5,770 followers  
2016: 4,819 followers



2019: 8,502 | 3%  
2018: 8,273 followers  
2017: 7,907 followers  
2016: 7,477 followers



2019: 202 followers | 20.2%  
2018: 168 followers

# Government Relations & Infrastructure

## DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS

In 2019, the ambassador program was charged with manning the red cart to help direct visitors around the Commons and to the new Visitor Center while also putting up and sanitizing the temporary playground.

Mason Wilhelm and Nick Cartmill greeted over 1,130 visitors from around the country and the world. Folks from 40 states stopped to ask questions and get information. Not surprisingly, there were 104 from Pennsylvania and 78 from New Jersey, our neighboring states. But we also saw visitors from Hawaii and Alaska and everywhere in between. We had visitors from 40 countries as well: 83 from Canada, 28 from England, 14 from Germany and several from New Zealand, South Africa, Israel and Qatar. Some of the common questions from visitors were about shopping and dining destinations, requests for maps and guides, directions to the bus stops and restrooms and dates for events — summer concerts, Bite of Ithaca and Apple Harvest Festival — on the Commons.

The clean team kept busy watering, weeding, shoveling and cleaning up litter as well as helping with set-up and breakdown for all special events. We also continued our partnership with TCAT for bus stop cleaning and partnered with the City to augment their work, including trash removal on City holidays.

## ART IN THE AIR

Returning for a fifth consecutive year, we organized Art in the Air, an open-call competition to feature local art on 12 vibrant vinyl banners hung on the Commons light poles. Nearly 100 blind submissions were received from local artists of all ages. These submissions were then juried and the winners selected. The selected artists were given their banners at the end of the exhibit. These year's 12 winners were: Ryan Curtis, Annie Zygarowicz, Margaret Corbit, Jon Reis, Trn N Vng Linh, Torie Tiffany, Karen Trotter, Casey Martin, Nancy Ridenour, and Daniel McPheeters. Those who wished to participate in the contest were tasked with creating an original design inspired by people. A panel of judges then selected the winning artwork that is featured on the banners.

The winners' magnificent artworks inspired by people were on display on the light posts on The Commons from July through October, adding color, variety, and beauty to the pedestrian mall.

## HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

The Commons again looked quite festive with the 27 snowflake holiday lights. This year, Downtown Ithaca added 15 additional smaller snowflake light installations along the 100 W. M.L.K. Jr. St. and 300 E. M.L.K. Jr. St. block.

## PAY IT FORWARD PILOT PROGRAM AND GRANT AWARD

"Pay It Forward" is a community partnership that enables persons in need to easily access food, toiletries and supplies on the street. This year, the program received hundreds of dollars in monetary donations from the boxes located on the Commons. These funds were then given to the program's participating businesses so they could provide products to those in need.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKER PROGRAM

The DIA co-funds the Family & Children's Services Community Outreach Worker Program, established as a means to reach out to and assist at-risk populations. A second team member, Natalya Cowitch, was added to work with Tammy Baker this year. The two of them have been building relationships with individuals in the program area, which extends from the Commons to Meadow Street, Dewitt Park, and the Tompkins County Public Library. Tammy also met with businesses and landlords, distinct human service agencies, city and county agencies, and area churches. These meetings have led to excellent collaborations. Tammy interacts with, on average, four individuals per day and has had over 600 individual interactions and more than 5,000 encounters since the program's inception. Says Tammy, "listening and meeting individuals where they are at is key." She is excited to continue effecting positive change in individuals and ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone in downtown and beyond.

## DIA NEW OFFICE SPACE EXPANSION

In August of 2018, we began an office expansion process to address the growing needs of our organization. We now have 2,911 square footage of space that includes a Conference Room for our board of directors and other important meetings, additional office space, a more hospitable entryway and a kitchen.





# Transportation Demand Management

## ITHACA TMA AND TDM PLANNER DEMONSTRATION

Early in 2019, the DIA concluded its pilot transportation demand management program called GO ITHACA. The program was funded by a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). This program researched the feasibility of creating a self-sustaining Transportation Management Association (TMA) focused specifically on the diverse businesses and stakeholders in

a constrained downtown Ithaca business district. During mid 2019, the City of Ithaca was awarded a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to continue TDM efforts. The City contracted the DIA to build its GO ITHACA program into a full fledged Transportation Management Association (TMA) aimed at helping workers and residents in Ithaca's urbanized area locate and use more affordable and sustainable modes of transportation for their commute and to complete errands. The TMA also assists in helping the City craft TDM policies for new developments.



## Grant Writing & Grant Funding

The DIA leverages its BID resources by undertaking grant writing. In 2019, this grant writing resulted in \$76,613 in new grants and \$1,606,125.16 in ongoing grant funding. Much of this funding is passed directly onto downtown constituents for specific projects and programs.

### GRANT FUNDING RECIPIENTS:

**TMA/TDM PROGRAM--**NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities Grant & NYSERDA

**FESTIVALS PROGRAM--**Tompkins County Festivals Program

**URBAN CORE LLC--**New York Main Street Grant

**SPECIAL EVENTS & MARKETING -** Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board

**ITHACA RENTING--**New York Main Street Grant

**DIA BEAUTIFICATION--** Tompkins County

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## DIA STAFF

**GARY FERGUSON**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**KRISTIN LEWIS**  
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

**ALLISON GRAFFIN**  
MARKETING DIRECTOR

**DARLENE M. DONOHUE**  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER/GO  
ITHACA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

**KRISTINA THELEN**  
BUSINESS OUTREACH COORDINATOR

**LORA MORROW**  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

**SCOTT ROUGEAU**  
SPECIAL EVENTS DIRECTOR

**OLIVIA PASTELLA**  
SPECIAL EVENTS ASSOCIATE

**MERCEDES REDMON**  
OFFICE MANAGER

**LAUREN GABUZZI**  
GO ITHACA PROGRAM MANAGER

**TIM MAVROS**  
LEAD AMBASSADOR

**JUD WIPF**  
AMBASSADOR

**LUKE SJOLUND**  
AMBASSADOR



### DIA NEW OFFICE SPACE EXPANSION

IN AUGUST OF 2018, WE BEGAN AN OFFICE EXPANSION PROCESS TO ADDRESS THE GROWING NEEDS OF OUR ORGANIZATION. WE NOW HAVE 2,911 SQUARE FOOTAGE OF SPACE THAT INCLUDES A CONFERENCE ROOM FOR OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OTHER IMPORTANT MEETINGS, ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE, A MORE HOSPITABLE ENTRYWAY AND A KITCHEN.



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 DIA SPONSORS

Tompkins Trust Company  
CFCU Community Credit Union  
Seneca Beverage  
Ithaca Marriott Downtown on The Commons  
City Centre Apartments  
Maguire Hyundai Subaru  
Wagner Vineyards  
Elmira Savings Bank  
Bacchus Brewing Company  
Cayuga Radio Group  
Community Arts Partnership (CAP)  
Cornell University Community Relations

Hilton Garden Inn  
Ithaca Guitar Works  
Ithaca Renting  
Sound on Sound Productions  
The Range  
Travis Hyde Properties  
The Tatkon Center for First Year Students, Cornell University  
Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board  
Treleven Wines  
Visions Financial Credit Union  
Tompkins Chamber

## CONTACT//

**Office:** 171 E M.L.K. Jr. St, Ithaca, NY 14850

**Phone:** (607) 277-8679

**E-mail:** [info@downtownithaca.com](mailto:info@downtownithaca.com)

[www.downtownithaca.com](http://www.downtownithaca.com)



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