



Downtown Ithaca Annual Report 2021



downtownithaca.com

WHO WE ARE:

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

• **Business Retention & Development**

• **Government Relations & Infrastructure**

• **Marketing, Communications & Membership Services**

• **Night Time Economy**

• **Special Events**

• **Transportation**

OUR VISION:

Downtown Ithaca is the economic, social, and cultural heart of Tompkins County. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance strives 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 and dining 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.

CONTENT

2 Who We Are / Our Vision/ Table Of Contents

3 Letter From Executive Director / Board President

4 & 5 Recovery / Pedestrian Counter Information

6 Business Retention And Development

7 Current Development Projects

8 Additional Retail And Retention Information

9 New Businesses

10 & 11 Special Events

12-15 Marketing

16 & 17 Communications

18 Year In Photographs

19 & 20 Government Relations & Infrastructures / Grants

21 GO ITHACA TDM

22 Board Of Directors / Staff Listing

23 Sponsorships

ANNUAL REPORT PHOTO CREDITS: Casey Martin, Darlene Wilber, Allison Graffin

DESIGNED BY: Lora Morrow

COVER PHOTO: @thisisithaca



DEAR DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDERS:

Dear Downtown Stakeholders:

We live in turbulent times. The COVID-19 pandemic has now reached two years, an unthinkable notion back in March 2020. It has been an arduous ride. Many of us have personally felt the pain of loss from family and friends. Most businesses have had to reinvent themselves; some successfully, others less so. Both businesses and commercial property owners have had to navigate the impact of the pandemic on declining revenues. Our vulnerable populations became even more vulnerable as many of their services and supports withered. As a nation and a people, we have been experiencing significant changes- in the ways we converse, shop, and recreate. In Downtown Ithaca, the center and hub of our community, we live and experience these changes daily.

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance exists to make Downtown Ithaca a stronger, healthier, more vibrant and sustainable place for the people who live, work, visit, and invest here. For years we have encouraged growth and development in the urban core while working to nurture and sustain the businesses that comprise our marketplace. As we expectantly navigate the recovery phase of this pandemic, we strive to help Downtown remain a vital center for our city, our county, and our region.

Recovery means many things:

- To retailers, it means growing back foot traffic, becoming more adept at on-line retailing to supplement their bricks and mortar locations, and it means solving the many challenges that face small businesses in today's world.

- To restaurants, recovery means a return to normalized seating and spacing; it means overcoming the very deep and real labor shortages that have affected hours and days of operation.

- To offices, recovery mean navigating the remote and hybrid work environments that grew out of the pandemic.

- To landlords, recovery means working to fill vacancies, both retail/commercial and office. It means understanding the changes to campus life that the pandemic and its various variant waves have brought to our community.

- To nonprofits, recovery have meant trying to accomplish more with less; seeing need increase across the board, while watching income shrink.

- To our shopping and dining consumers, it means helping them rediscover the magic and allure of Downtown that some chose to forego during the pandemic.

- To downtown workers, it means re-discovering travel and transit modes, finding reasons to experience downtown, and feeling appreciated and valued by the places they work.

- To marginalized and under-represented people, recovery means finding a place at the table of prosperity.

- To local government, recovery means growing back the tax base so that the services of government can be provided to all.

At the Downtown Ithaca Alliance we work with all of these constituencies, helping to position Downtown Ithaca to be a desirable, dynamic, and sustainable place now and in the years to come.

We focus on immediate projects and needs as well as longer term plans and strategies. Our long awaited 2030 plan will help guide the future of Downtown, identifying key initiatives and projects that will keep Downtown a strong, relevant, and impactful place for our City, our County, and our region. We continue to provide our constituents with essential and timely services designed to make our Downtown district a better place to work, live, visit, and invest. This annual report summarizes some of these short-and long-term initiatives.

On behalf of our dedicated staff and board, we thank you for your interest and commitment to Downtown and look forward to working with you in the months and years to come to make Downtown Ithaca the place of our dreams and imagination.

Ashley Cake

President, DIA Board of Directors

Gary Ferguson

Executive Director



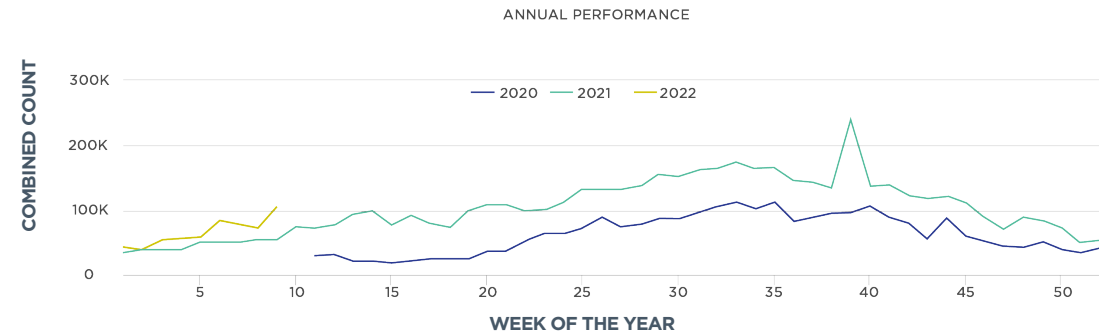
DOWNTOWN RECOVERY MEASURED BY FOOT TRAFFIC

Though a coronavirus vaccination was released in the spring and the State and County health departments relaxed health and safety mandates during the summer making it easier for people to travel, the pandemic continued to have a significant impact on our pedestrian traffic on the Commons in 2021. Footfalls were down by nearly 15% from 2019, according to footfalls recorded by our pedestrian counters.

A bright spot; however, footfalls during the first eight weeks of 2022 are already surpassing 2021 which means pedestrian traffic is getting closer to our pre-pandemic counts.

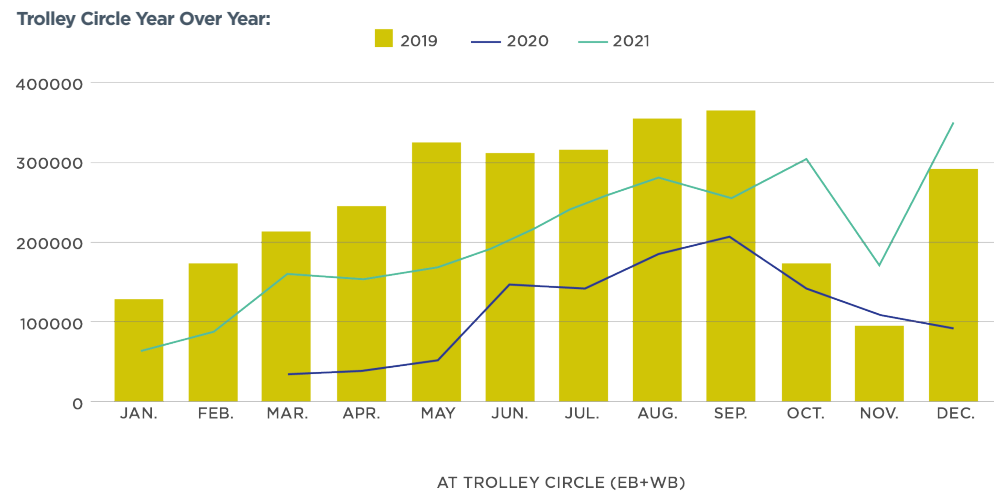
PEDESTRIAN COUNTERS

A Pedestrian Counter is a digital device installed to monitor foot traffic day in and day out at 10 key locations around the Ithaca Commons. While there are many points of entry onto the Commons, the counters provide an excellent source of data to better understand the pedestrian volume, behavior, and trends downtown. DIA works with a company called SpringBoard, based out of the UK, with US service based out of California and Massachusetts. The counters were installed and went online in March 2020 just days before the national pandemic lockdown. Prior to 2020, the DIA contracted with another firm, Motion Left to provide pedestrian counter data, but in a smaller number of locations.



Data from SpringBoard

This Annual Performance chart shows Commons pedestrian traffic compared by week: 2020 (blue), 2021 (green), 2022 (lime). The green line shows 2021 foot traffic surpassed 2020 foot, traffic counts. This makes sense given all the positive changes happening in 2021 during the pandemic that allowed people to return to work and travel: many state restrictions were eased allowing businesses to reopen. By spring 2021, a vaccination was available making it safer for vaccinated workers, visitors, and tourists to return to our community. Plus, you see in the above graph, 2022 (the lime line) footfalls are already surpassing 2021.



The chart above: YOY Footfalls 2019-2021 at our Trolley Circle EB & WB counter locations, our most popular areas for pedestrian traffic. Data from MotionLoft and SpringBoard.

Foot traffic year over year

2019: 2,700,396**

2020: 1,055,833** (avail. March 30 to December 2020)

2021: 2,307,163**

**YoY Range: The previous MotionLoft pedestrian counters tallied 2019 foot traffic for Trolley Circle and half a year's worth of foot traffic on the Commons near Aurora Street/Restaurant Row. MotionLoft counters were decommissioned on Jan. 17, 2020. The new SpringBoard pedestrian counters were installed during the 14th week of 2020 (March 30-April 5), the week before NYS was shutdown. SpringBoard provided additional counters so we can measure footfalls at in all directions at three points — Trolley Circle, Aurora Street, Cayuga Street.

2021 PEDESTRIAN COUNTER REPORTS



Study Period: Wk 14 April 5, 2021 - Wk 10 March 13, 2022

COMBINED FOOT TRAFFIC

5,294,213 | ALL LOCATIONS + ALL DIRECTIONALITY

BUSIEST:

MONTH: September 2021, August 2021, May 2021 (in order)

WEEK: September 27, 2021 - October 3, 2021

LOCATION + DIRECTIONALITY: Trolley Circle-- Westbound

AVERAGE:

TOP 3 DAY(S) OF THE WEEK: SATURDAY, FRIDAY, SUNDAY (in order)

TOP 4 HOUR(S) OF THE DAY: 1:00PM, 2:00PM, 12:00PM, 6:00PM (in order)

TROLLEY CIRCLE

2,214,311 | DIRECTIONALITY: Eastbound toward Aurora St., Westbound toward Cayuga St.

BUSIEST MONTH: AUGUST | DAY: SATURDAY | HOUR: 1:00 PM

RESTAURANT ROW

1,584,342 | DIRECTIONALITY: North, East, South + Westbound

BUSIEST MONTH: SEPTEMBER | DAY: SATURDAY | HOUR: 6:00 PM

CAYUGA STREET

1,495,578 | DIRECTIONALITY: North, East, South + Westbound

BUSIEST MONTH: SEPTEMBER | DAY: SATURDAY | HOUR: 1:00 PM



BUSINESS RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Ithaca continues to be a shining community in upstate New York, led by 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.

CURRENT MAJOR PROJECTS

Green Street Redevelopment Project: Asteri, Green Street Garage, The Ithacan

GREEN STREET GARAGE & 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. It's a \$112 Million, 199,884 square foot project that broke ground in 2021. The \$112 million 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. A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Asteri and Conference Center project in September 2021. Completion is scheduled for late Fall 2023.



DOWNTOWN ITHACA COMMUNITY CONFERENCE CENTER

Part of the Vecino project is a two-story, 54,000 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), a \$2.0 million federal HUD EDI grant, 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).

THE ITHACAN AND ROTHSCHILD BUILDING

The eastern third of the Green Street garage site is being redeveloped by developer Jeffrey Rimland. This \$40 million project will create a 114,000 square-foot multi-use building with 200 market-rate housing units, plus, 150 new parking spaces. The project enhanced the existing office and retail space in the attached Rothschild Building. In 2021, the Rothschild Building welcomed the addition of Ithaca College's Physicians Assistant Program.

401 EAST STATE STREET

McKinley Development is undertaking a 240,000 square foot residential development project on the rear portion of the Gateway site, located at the eastern end of Downtown. This \$53 million project will consist of 321 units of new apartment housing. The building will also contain a parking garage for a total of 318 spaces. Roughly half of the spaces will be reserved for existing Gateway patronage and the balance will be utilized by the new housing. The project has received all the necessary approvals to move forward. Construction is expected to begin soon.

DOWNTOWN GROWTH BY NUMBERS

Combined these projects will add:

\$205 million of total new investment

739 total units of new housing

818 total parking spaces

553,884 total SF of new space

MORE PROJECTS

There are several other Downtown development projects that will come to fruition in 2022.



RETAIL SUPPORT & BUSINESS RETENTION

Throughout 2021, the DIA worked to support downtown businesses through a number of different business outreach activities and marketing promotions.

eCOMMERCE READINESS PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

In partnership with the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Small Business Development Center, the DIA, in 2021, launched a pilot program to help assist Downtown Ithaca Retailers in e-commerce readiness.

For this two-part program, Downtown Ithaca retailers become enrolled into the SBDC eCommerce Strategy Program (an individually packaged technical assistance consulting program tailored to the client) and upon completion of this technical assistance, they would be eligible to receive an implementation grant from the DIA for up to \$1,000 on pre-approved eCommerce related costs. Since the launch of the program in June four (4) downtown businesses have joined this program.



DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE DATABASE

In 2021, we launched LOIS, a digital platform that supplies a search database of office and retail real estate availability in our community. During the first year of utilizing this program, we concentrated on prioritizing the data collection for office vacancies as the first phase of our office attraction initiative. This platform is intended to help various entrepreneurs find a home for their business as well as assist property owners market and increase their reach to potential tenants. To access the platform, visit downtownithaca.com/businessdevelopment/lois/

MERCHANT MEETINGS

During 2021, we continued ongoing remote merchant meetings to inform and assist the retail community.

PARTNERSHIP

We once again partnered with the Tompkins County Convention and Visitor Bureau on the February 2022 Ithaca Loves Teachers promotion that featured discounts and deals on dining, shopping, and services at our shops, restaurants, and other businesses.

POP UP PROGRAM

In 2020, we launched a retail Pop Up Program. This DIA initiative was designed to provide short-term leases to help support local entrepreneurs seeking temporary spaces for their businesses. Pop-Up contracts are an affordable option for entrepreneurs, and the agreements vary from vendor to vendor depending on the building and the entrepreneur's circumstances. Since the program's inception, eight businesses — Sunshine's Creative Designs, Local Fiber Holiday PopUp, Center Cafe by Lou, Finger Lakes Bakes, The Bloomwell Holiday PopUp, and Urban Blendz, Sophie's Sweets and The Rest Gallery — have been part of this program. Since participating in the pop-up, three businesses — Sunshine's Creative Designs, Center Cafe by Lou and The Rest Gallery — have signed long-term leases.



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

The Collaborative Retail Experience Grant launched in 2019. In its second year, the CREG program provided businesses within the BID the opportunity to organize and administer shared, collaborative promotional, and small in-person or virtual foot traffic generating projects. This program is geared towards empowering first-floor businesses in trying something new and doing so with the cooperation of other downtown merchants (as well as local artists, non-profit organizations, etc).

We awarded small matching micro-grants to groups of merchants who collaborated on such events/promotions. The merchant project leader and supporting merchant's time provided the match for the awarded funding. Businesses were invited to apply for up to \$500 per project twice in 2021, or once for a single project up to \$1,000 in the calendar year (with application pre-approval from the Business Development Director for the higher valued award). Six (6) \$500 awards were given and four (4) were given in the amount of \$1,000 for a total of 10 Collaborative Events in 2021.

Projects included Spy Week (Alphabet Soup), The Greenhouse Gets Greener (The Greenhouse Cafe and Cocktail Lounge), Adrina Deitra Kickstarter Fundraising Event (Mama Said Hand Pies), Read Local (Odyssey Bookstore), All Hallows Eve in the Allies (Lucky Hare Brewing), Donuts by the Fire (One Ring Donuts), Body Positivity Video Campaign (Adrina Dietra), Back to School Cuts and Curls for Boys and Girls (Mane and Wigs), Dewitt Mall 50th Anniversary Celebration Reusable Bag Giveaway (Cat's Pajamas), and Cooking with CBD (Your CBD Store).

NETWORKING

Our in-person Merchant Appreciation Night networking events were paused in 2020 due to the pandemic.



TECHNICAL SUPPORT, VISITATIONS, & OUTREACH

In 2021, we continued to offer targeted technical support by meeting one-on-one with businesses for in-depth discussions on COVID-recovery, marketing, management, succession planning, and operational concerns. We worked one-on-one with 20+ individuals and the entire BID area collectively to do so.

Each year, the DIA also seeks to visit downtown businesses to learn about their concerns, issues, and opportunities. With the ongoing pandemic, the outreach efforts involved monthly virtual check-in meetings that included updates regarding vaccination requirements, masking mandates, business reopenings, capacity limits, personnel management, relief funding, and information on support/marketing efforts within the BID.

RETAIL COMMITTEE

As of January 2022, we have launched an official Retail Committee to continue these targeted efforts to address this sector's goals and concerns. Monthly Merchant Updates newsletters have continued to be dispersed for a digest of relevant topics relating to COVID updates as well as regular downtown and business operations newsworthy events.

NEW BUSINESSES IN 2021

This past year was a period of growth and investment in our small business sector.

The addition of these 18 new and expanded businesses has contributed to the continued revitalization and diversification of our community's central commercial hub.

2021- March 2022 NEW BUSINESSES OPENED

CTHDRL 416 E. State St.

Galvanic MedSpa 102. N. Tioga St.

Greenhouse Cafe and Cocktail Lounge 320 E. State St.

Ithaca Mini Mart, 124 S. Cayuga Street

IthacaN Flea Market By Sunny Days, 215 E. State St.

Karp, Ackerman, Small & Hogan, CPAs, PC (KASH), 202 The Commons

Lev Kitchen, 222 The Commons

Lou's Street Food, 171 The Commons

Luna Love Holistic Hair Studio, 215 N. Cayuga St.

One Stop Kicks, 107 S. Cayuga St.

Rashida Sawyer Bakery, 110 W. Green St.

Shoji Arts, 120 N. Aurora St.

Serenity Beautique, 121 S. Cayuga St.

Serendipity, 205 N. Aurora St.

Sunshine's Creative Designs, 215 N. Cayuga St.

The Pretty Peach, 112 W. State St.

Tioga State Bank, 311 E. Green St.

ZaZa Smoke Shop, 101 E. State St.

2021-early 2022 EXISTING DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES WHO RELOCATED WITHIN THE DISTRICT:

Breathe and **Sunny Days of Ithaca**, both in 171 E. State Street

Ithaca Ale House, 301 E. State St.

2021-early 2022 BUSINESS CLOSURES

The pandemic has had a significant impact on small businesses in our district. Two ground-level businesses closed permanently and four ground-level businesses moved out of the district during the pandemic. Plus, we learned that Trader K's owners will be closing in April 2022. Its owners are retiring.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our Special Events team had to continue to adjust activities in 2021. We held late winter events in a virtual, hybrid, or socially distanced format. While this format enabled us to continue a community presence for Downtown Ithaca, attendance remained far lower than 2019. By summer, state and county restriction lifts allowed for larger events like our Summer Concerts and Apple Harvest Festival to return. 2021 also brought more rigorous State and City regulations for major events, making them more challenging than ever to plan. Overall, we were still able to activate our district and engage our community during the restricted times and return to in-person major events beginning in the summer. All of our events came in on budget!



GALLERY NIGHT

In 2021, Gallery Night functioned in a virtual capacity at the beginning of the year before shifting to a hybrid (virtual/in-person & socially distance) model during the summer. Gallery Night takes place on the first Friday of each month at an average of 8-10 locations and features dozens of regional and local artists participating every month. While gallery doors were shut down during the first quarter of the year, the DIA produced virtual immersive and interactive galleries to showcase local artists' work. Galleries also activated their window spaces for those that still wanted the walking experience. As restrictions were lifted, galleries, shops, restaurants, and other locations reopened to share artwork created by a variety of artists. The walking tour continues to attract new visitors to downtown. 2021 Gallery Night was presented by Tompkins Trust Company and supported in part by the Community Arts Partnership. In 2022, Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis came on board as the title sponsor.



CFCU SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

In 2021, our concert series shifted back to in-person performances. The 2021 concert series featured 8 concerts ranging in musical styles including bluegrass, funk, soul, rock, and hip-hop. Concerts were held at the Bernie Milton Pavilion. CFCU returned this year as the concert series' presenting sponsor, with additional support by Seneca Beverage Corp., Wagner Vineyards, Marriott Ithaca Downtown on the Commons, Monks on the Commons, Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis, Cayuga Health, Ithaca Times, Alt 95.9.



APPLE HARVEST FESTIVAL

Although in-person events were happening again in 2021, mass gatherings weren't cleared to happen until later in the year, a decision that came a few weeks before our biggest event of the year, Apple Harvest Festival. Despite the short notice that our event could happen, our team rallied to organize one of the largest festivals, to date, drawing over 70,000 attendees to enjoy hundreds of fresh farm foods and craft vendors. The Apple Harvest Festival has been supported by Tompkins Trust Company for over 10 years.



HALLOWEEN IN DOWNTOWN

Halloween returned to the downtown where at least a dozen of our businesses welcomed around 1,000 trick or treaters in a safe, socially distanced, contactless treat gathering setup.



WINTER LIGHTS FESTIVAL

Our Winter Lights Festival in December was presented by Tompkins Trust Company. The multi-weekend celebration included live entertainment from fire dancers, aerialists, an Ithaca Sabres lightsaber demonstration and invitational, an ice bar, and Beyond Cocoa Bar. The festivities included the 11th annual Chowder Cook-Off, Santa's Arrival, and Sparky the Unicorn. Plus, there was a black light exhibit on the Commons and a light display in Harolds Square's ground floor windows that were both created by the Beyond Art Collective. Also, we had functional ice sculptures including ice thrones and snow people which were a huge hit the first weekend of the festival before they melted away in the unusually warm weather.

We also hosted three silent discos — a fourth one was canceled due to weather — this year instead of one. Each disco was a huge success with the crowds as three different DJs pumped out music each night. We saw roughly 400-500 people attend each of the dance parties. Our Chowder Cook-Off, a hybrid model — in restaurants the week leading up to a big competition on the Commons — and cumulatively drew roughly 25,000 people.

We brought back the tradition of Santa rappelling down Center Ithaca. Leading up to his descent from the rooftop we had performances from the Cayuga Orchestra Brass Quartet. Plus, Habitat for Humanity of Tompkins and Cortland Counties sold gingerbread houses and cookie-making kits and Youth Entrepreneur Market (YEM) hosted a holiday market.



CHILI COOK-OFF

Our annual Chili Cook-Off celebrated its 24th year in March 2022. To provide more opportunities for folks to enjoy the gourmet chilis prepared by culinary experts, we organized two options— an in-restaurant promotion the week leading up to the event and the big competition on and around the Commons. Chili enthusiasts were encouraged to patronize local restaurants by dining in with hopes of trying unique chili offerings and supporting our local restaurant partners.

This year's Chili Cook-Off winners, selected by the community through in-person public voting and a panel of judges: People's Choice: Covered Bridge Market; Best Presentation: Luna Inspired Street Food; Best Meat Seabring Inn; Best Vegetarian Kilpatrick's Publick House; Best Vegan: Youth Entrepreneurship Market/Southside Community Centre; Best Chili Inspired Item: Gorgers Subs; Best Beverage: Monks on the Commons. The 24th annual Chili Cook-Off was presented by Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis.



CANCELED EVENTS DUE TO PANDEMIC:

Due to the pandemic, the following special events were canceled in 2021. These events are designed with the goal in mind to bring people together in downtown and enjoy fun social activities. There was no suitable virtual event or safely socially distant replacement that could capture the spirit of the events during the pandemic.

Ithaca Festival & Ithaca Festival Craft Show

MARKETING

Downtown Ithaca organized several promotions designed to encourage shopping, dining, and downtown living. The promotions happened at strategic times in the year to help bring residents, students, visitors, and tourists downtown. We organized general awareness campaigns that highlighted downtown as a core attraction in the county and region.

The ongoing pandemic required us to shift the course of some planned promotions for the year. Promotions were redesigned to encourage socially distant, low-density shopping, dining, and awareness building. Some previously scheduled promotions were able to operate but with modified safety precautions. In contrast, others were outright canceled for the year because there wasn't a safe way to implement them.

PROMOTIONS

DOWNTOWN LIVING AND STAYING TOUR:

As an adaptation during the pandemic, we created a promotion that allowed people to view downtown spaces in a new and interactive way. Using a smart interactive pod called Pivo, created 360 videos of downtown spaces. We used this technology to create a virtual tour of eight (8) living spaces and four (4) hotels and promoted these spaces as part of a virtual Living and Staying Tour. Take a virtual peek inside a few of the apartment and hotel options in the heart of downtown at downtownithaca.com/downtownlivingtour.

ITHACA LOVES TEACHERS

Ithaca Loves Teachers 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, ILT continues to be an effective promotion to help businesses during an especially slow time in business and tourism. Taking place in February each year, ILT returned to an in-person event stretched over two weeks to allow teachers to spread out their activities and the registration passes moved to a web-based software application allowing for teachers to access their deals, check-in at businesses, and redeem them from their smartphone devices.

Statistics of Note: Over 2,400 redemptions recorded | **1,926** teachers registered

95% of teachers were from New York State. There were teachers from **13** other states participating.

BITE OF ITHACA:

Foodies of all ages were thrilled for the return of our ultimate food promotion from June 14 - June 20. Nearly two dozen participating restaurants provided multiple \$5 samplers and/or sips to guests. Diners were able to purchase meals and then complete and digitally submit a BITE passport to document their foodie journey and earn a chance to win a prize.

SUMMER SALE WEEKENDS

In 2021, Downtown Ithaca organized and promoted sales in Downtown shops happening at the end of July. Participating retailers in the district offered discounts on seasonal apparel and merchandise ranging from 10-50% off.

WELCOME STUDENT DEALS/ CONTEST

With the pandemic still surging, we didn't host our traditional Welcome Students Weekend, but we promoted our businesses' deals for students on our website. Also, we hosted a simple contest intended to help Cornell University, Ithaca College, or Tompkins Cortland Community College students learn more about their downtown community. We gave away \$100 and \$50 gift cards to students who like/follow our social media as part of the contest.

APPRECIATION DISCOUNT CARD

This year, Downtown Employee Discount Cards weren't distributed due to resource issues at the DIA. The 280 cards that were distributed in 2020 were still valid through 2021.

NEW COVID-19 RESPONSE PROMOTION



TOMPKINS TOGETHER

Working in the hospitality industry is not easy, and it's made even more challenging by the changes brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. To ensure hospitality workers know their work is valued and appreciated, we partnered with Visit Ithaca, and the Tompkins Chamber to launch a campaign to support people working in the industry. The goal of this campaign is to spread kindness, encourage patience, and elicit understanding in acknowledgment that businesses are experiencing real staffing challenges. #TompkinsTogether is looking to include the entire community. You will see posters, window clings, and messages across Ithaca and the surrounding communities.

SHOP SMALL WEEKEND:

For the second consecutive year, Downtown Ithaca celebrated Shop Small Weekend. We combined multiple holiday sales/related one-day promotions — Black/Plaid/Green Friday, Small Business Saturday & Cyber Monday — in Shop Small Weekend, one long weekend focusing on the importance of shopping at small, local businesses.

This three-day promotion held the days following Thanksgiving was designed to encourage people to support our small businesses throughout the weekend and during the entire holiday shopping season. Shop Small Weekend was promoted through a dedicated advertising campaign about the weekend in addition to tying into the whole holiday retail marketing campaign that spans the months of November through the end of December. A digital, radio, print, and visual advertising campaign promoted the weekend and drove people to the Downtown Ithaca homepage to learn about the various specifics of the weekend. As a shopping incentive for Shop Small Weekend, Alliance staff distributed nearly 2,000 Shop Local in Downtown Ithaca branded reusable canvas tote bags to downtown shopkeepers to give to customers who made purchases \$25 or more throughout the weekend. The bag artwork was custom-designed in-house. The canvas bag promo was a huge success for downtown, participating shops, and customers.



DOWNTOWNITHACA.COM

April 2021 - March 2022 ANALYTICS

Downtownithaca.com saw an increase in visitors and pageviews, and much of this can be attributed to the return of special events site traffic. Plus, in 2021, new SEO & SEM strategies helped close the gap and return viewership to our site again.

April 1, 2021 - March 9, 2022

USERS: 170,202 | +90.5%

NEW USERS:129,353 | +44%

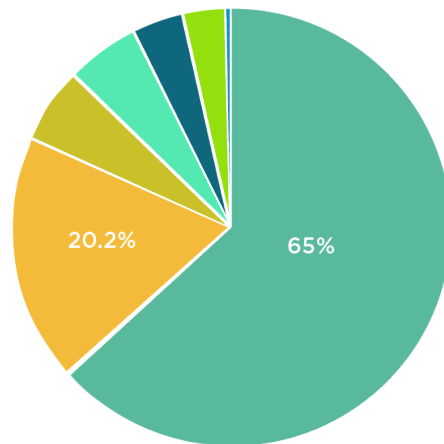
TOTAL PAGE VIEWS 2021: 289,720 | +27.6

AVG. SESSION DURATION: 1.21 | - 11%

BOUNCE RATE: 66.52% | +11.6%

SITE BEHAVIOR - TOP 5 PAGES ON SITE:

1. **Apple Harvest Festival** » Downtown Ithaca 39,955
2. **Restaurants, Shopping, Events, Arts & Culture, Hotels**
Downtown Ithaca Downtown Ithaca » 33,588
3. **Dining Archives** » Downtown Ithaca 16,209
4. **Shopping Archives** » Downtown Ithaca 13,218
5. **Upcoming Events** | Downtown Ithaca 13,190



TOP CHANNEL ACQUISITIONS

April 1, 2021 - March 9, 2022

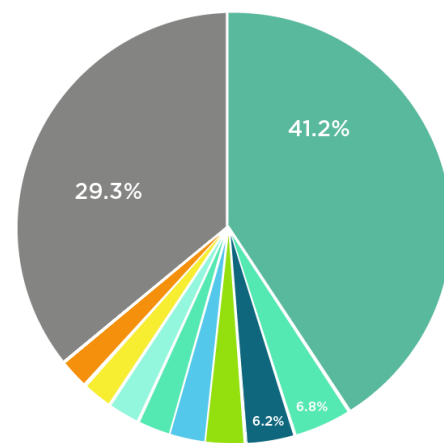
Organic: **65%**

Direct: **20.2%**

Referral: **4.93%**

Social: **4.89%**

Display: **2.13%**



TOP SITE REFERRALS

April 1, 2021 - March 9, 2022

Facebook.com: **41.8% | + 8.6%**

Visitithaca.com: **12.4%**

IthacaVoice.com: **6.15%**

NewYorkState.com **3.25%**

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 keeps 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 2020 - March 2021, Downtown Ithaca sold 1,675 gift cards amounting to \$100,230.00

New in 2021: Gift cards are now available for purchase in Alphabet Soup, Sunny Days of Ithaca, and at the Visitor Center on the Commons.



2018



April 2018 -
March 2019

Gift cards
sold: 1,107

Dollars
kept local: \$
\$59,600.00

2019

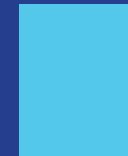


April 2019 -
March 2020

Gift cards
sold: 1,126

Dollars
kept local:
\$58,000.00

2020



April 2020 -
March 2021

GIFT CARDS
SOLD: 923

DOLLARS
KEPT LOCAL:
\$41,655

2021

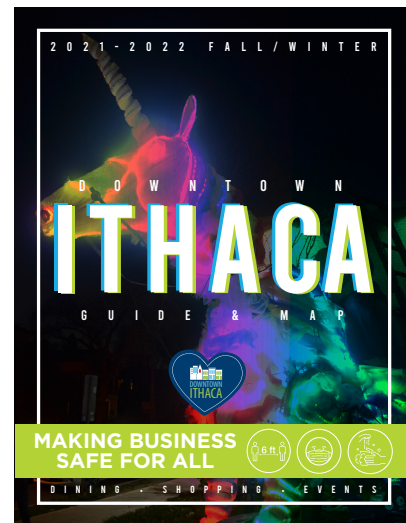


April 2021-
March 2022

GIFT CARDS
SOLD: 1,675

DOLLARS
KEPT LOCAL:
\$100,230

COMMUNICATIONS



NEWSLETTERS: ENEWS, STAKEHOLDERS, MERCHANTS UPDATES & TRANSPORTATION

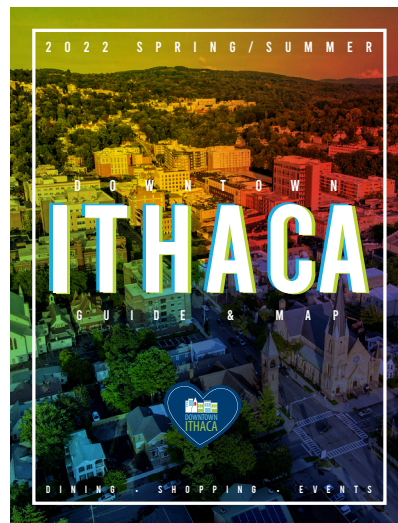
We distribute a weekly email newsletter with events, member business announcements, and promotions happening in Downtown Ithaca. Our E-News is sent weekly to over 5,000 individuals, including business and property owners, residents, offices, and the general public who subscribe to the newsletter. Additionally, the DIA emails Quarterly member mail newsletters geared toward BID stakeholders —property owners, retailers, and restaurants — updating them on important downtown news. In addition, we provide a bi-monthly Merchant Update newsletter to downtown's 200+ businesses. Plus, we offer a monthly transportation newsletter to our transportation demand management (GO ITHACA) members, providing information on the transportation world's happenings.

BI-ANNUAL SEASONAL GUIDES

We produce 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 2021, the DIA circulated over 35,000 guides to businesses, colleges, restaurants, and hotels. Our 2021 guides included a special section showcasing products at downtown retail stores and featured Covid-19 Response information for visitors and locals.

SPECIAL REPORTS

We produce our annual report to showcase the work we've accomplished during the past year. For 2022, in addition to this report, the DIA is planning to produce a State of Downtown report, which will provide detailed information about our Business Improvement District.



MEDIA RELATIONS

We regularly communicate with local and regional media about our businesses, special events, economic development, initiatives, programs, and more by producing over 100 press releases and participate in hundreds of media interviews each year.

FACES OF DOWNTOWN

In 2021, we worked with nine 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 2022.

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE INSERT

We produced a holiday gift guide insert for the winter season. 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. 2,500 were distributed with Seasonal Guides.

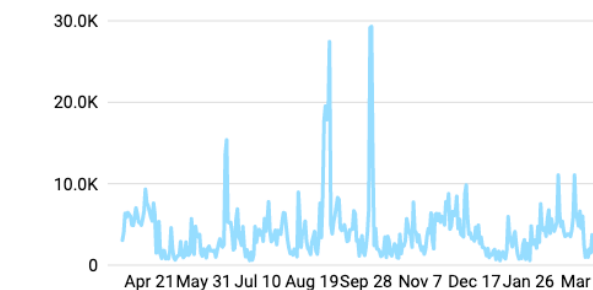
SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS

Downtown Ithaca utilizes key social media outlets to market to residents, students and visitors. It also provides valuable insight into how people engage with our downtown. Of all the social media accessible, We use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and occasionally YouTube and TicTok to reach various audiences. We see the most growth in Facebook and Instagram, which makes sense since these are our primary accounts where we post the most content and engage with our audiences and the profiles we follow.

Reach

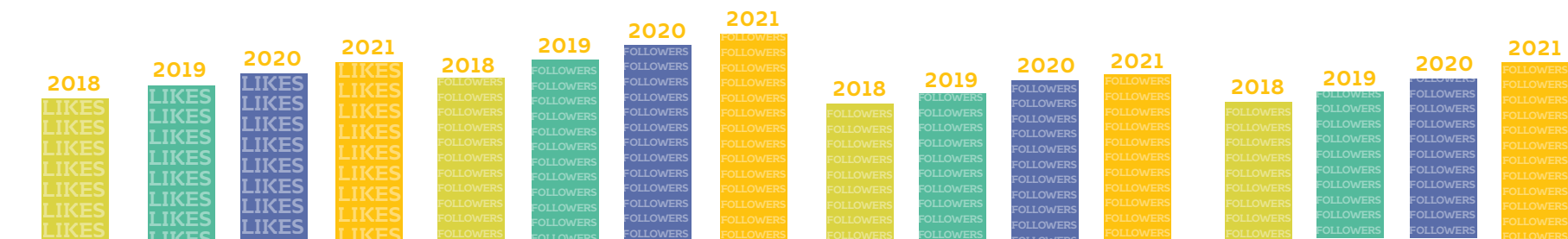
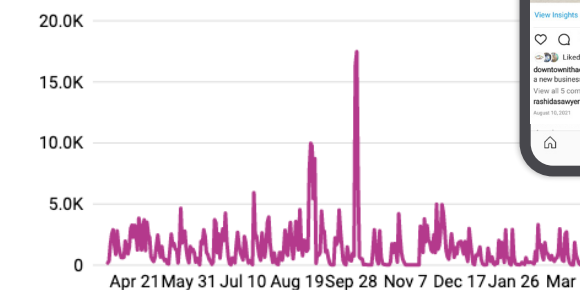
Facebook Page Reach

450,576 ↑ 17.2%



Instagram Reach

119,197 ↑ 230.1%



2021: 22,326 +2 %
2020: 21,966 +1.6% likes
2019: 21,619 likes | +4.8%
2018: 20,632 likes



2021: 11,730 +9% followers
2020: 10,791 +19.92% |
2019: 8,998 | +19%
2018: 7,582 followers



2021 8,880 +0.84%
2020: 8,806 +3.6%
2019: 8,502 +3%
2018: 8,273 followers
2017: 7,907 followers



2021: 306 +39.72
2020: 259 followers +28%
2019: 202 followers +20.2%
2018: 168 followers

2021: A YEAR IN PHOTOS



Ithaca College Physician Assistant Program opens on the Commons.



Businesses reopened and customers returned to shopping inside stores.



Our Annual Dinner & Awards returned after a year off due to the pandemic. Pictured are our speakers: Scot Vanderpool, Gary Ferguson, Gladys Brangman, Susan Salahshor.



Santa's Arrival returned. Additional special events also made a come back to the Commons this year. See page 11 for more information.



We returned to hosting ribbon-cutting ceremonies. In this image: City & DIA reps celebrate 15 STEPS' new ownership and Breathe's new location.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS & INFRASTRUCTURE

downtownithaca.com

19



DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS

Our clean team ambassadors continued to keep the downtown and Commons area clean and attractive. Ambassadors performed sanitizing work to minimize danger and public health concerns for our visitors and guests. In addition, the clean team kept busy watering, weeding, shoveling, cleaning up litter, and removing graffiti. We also continued our partnership with TCAT for bus stop maintenance and partnered with the City to augment their work, including trash removal on weekends and City holidays. Clean crew ambassadors work all year and can be found downtown 7 days a week!

GREEN STREET GARAGE MITIGATION

The Green Street Garage has been closed during 2021 and is projected to reopen in May 2022. Our team worked with the City of Ithaca to develop decorative solutions — lighting and wayfinding — for the landscape surrounding the project site.

HAND SANITIZER STATIONS & CLEANING

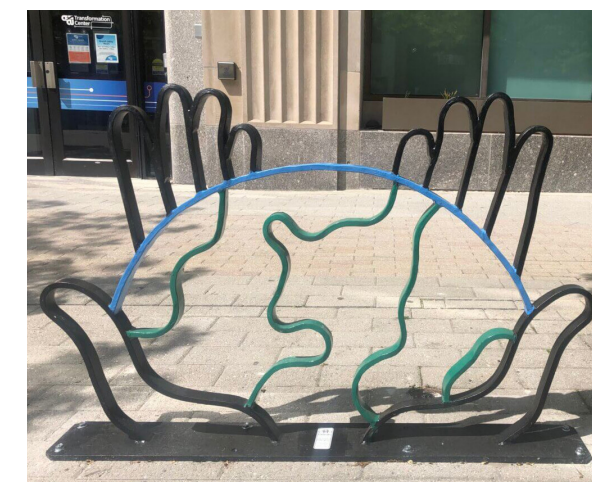
Working in partnership with the City of Ithaca, DIA maintains several hand sanitizer dispenser stations around the Ithaca Commons to help residents and visitors have easy access to hand sanitizer. Throughout the pandemic, ambassadors expanded cleaning efforts to include frequent disinfecting of public use handrails, chairs tables, and commonly touched surfaces around downtown.

ART BIKE RACKS

We partnered with the City of Ithaca on an Art Bike Rack II Design Competition where community members submitted bike rack designs. Then, the designs were fabricated by Teo Aceto, a skilled local artist, and blacksmith. The latest racks are in addition to 12 bike stands that were installed downtown from an earlier contest.

COMMUNITY WIFI

Working with a firm from NYC, we are finalizing plans to launch a free community wifi service by summer 2022 for the Commons area of downtown.



COMMUNITY BIKE REPAIR STATION

Through partnerships and grant funding, we were able to purchase a community bike repair station equipped with the tools required for basic bike repairs and maintenance. The station also includes arms to hold a bicycle in place during the repair process. The bike repair station and pump in Press Bay Court were funded in part by the Sustainable Tompkins Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program with additional support from the Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA), Urban Core LLC, Bike Walk Tompkins (BWT), and GO ITHACA.

LIGHT POLE BANNER PROGRAM

Throughout the year, decorative seasonal banners are hung along the light poles on the north side along the Commons. Twelve light poles in all, the banners are switched out every 4 months to feature seasonal imagery and messages. Each light pole is sponsored by a district business for the year in order to make the program possible.



AURORA STREATERY

Throughout at least half of 2021, Covid safety guidelines continued to limit the capacity inside shops and restaurants. For restaurants, this was especially challenging. However, outdoor dining was sanctioned and encouraged by the State of New York--provided enough space between tables could be maintained. Working in partnership with the City of Ithaca, DIA once again closed the 100 block of N. Aurora street to vehicular traffic. This allowed the restaurants to expand their outdoor dining footprint to the full expanse of the sidewalk area in front of their business out to the curb. Ramps were installed and pedestrian traffic was routed into the full expanse of the street.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

The Commons again looked quite festive with 27 snowflake holiday lights and LED lighting fixtures installed around the Commons trees. Fifteen additional smaller snowflake light installations were along the 100 W. M.L.K. Jr. St. and 300 E. M.L.K. Jr. St. block. Plus, our color-changing LED holiday tree illuminated Bank Alley on the Commons.

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. Annually, the program receives monetary donations from the boxes located on the Commons. These funds are then given to the program's participating businesses so they can 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. Natalya Cowilch, and Will Taylor serve as the outreach team. Natalya and Will are building relationships with individuals in the program area, which extends from the Commons to Meadow Street, Dewitt Park, and the Tompkins County Public Library. Natalya and Will also met with businesses and landlords, distinct human service agencies, city and county agencies, and area churches. These meetings have led to excellent collaborations. They interact with, on average, six to 12 individuals per day and have had over 4,000 individual interactions and more than 10,000 encounters since the program's inception.

Grant Writing & Grant Funding

The DIA leverages its BID resources by undertaking grant writing. In 2021 through March 2022, this grant writing resulted in \$350,750 in new grants and \$33,160 in ongoing grant funding. Much of this funding is passed directly onto downtown constituents for specific projects and programs.

GRANT FUNDING RECIPIENTS:

Tompkins County Tourism Grant; Downtown Ambassadors Grant

Tompkins County Tourism Grant; Downtown Hospitality Grant

Main Street Grant (Awarded April 2021)

Sustainable Tompkins Neighborhood Grant
(Awarded in April 2021)

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

GO ITHACA TDM PROGRAM & TMA FORMATION

In mid-2019, the City of Ithaca was awarded a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Smart Communities grant to continue transportation demand management 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 to locate and use affordable and sustainable modes of transportation for their commute and to complete errands. The program currently offers transportation benefits to over 500 members and 20 businesses.

TMA FORMATION

The program is currently exploring options that will lead to becoming a full-fledged and sustainable transportation management association.

TDM POLICY

GO ITHACA is working with the City of Ithaca Planning Department to incorporate transportation demand management requirements into the Site Plan Review process.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION LEADERS

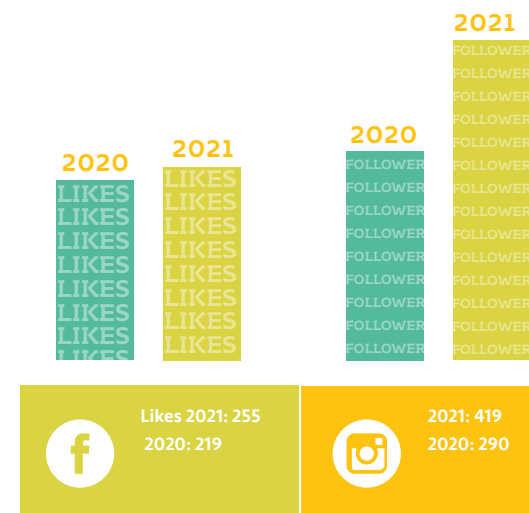
In 2021, GO ITHACA led a Sustainable Transportation Leaders program consisting of Ithaca High School students. This group helped beautify the Aurora Streatery by painting its wheelchair accessibility ramps. For more information about this program, visit goithaca.org.

ACTIVITIES

Our transportation team offered a series of special activities. During the summer, GO ITHACA partnered with our special events team to conduct an LGBTQIA+ History Tour. The event was held on June 26 and garnered nearly 40 attendees.

LOW-INCOME PROGRAM

GO ITHACA and the Center for Community Transportation developed a program that provides additional support to low-income members in the program.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ASHLEY CAKE
PRESIDENT, LATE NIGHT
ECONOMY COMMITTEE
CHAIR

The Watershed & The
Downstairs

**TERI TARSHUS, VP
FOR DOWNTOWN
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**
Baywood Hotels

**JOE WETMORE, VP FOR
DOWNTOWN EVENTS
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**
Autumn Leaves Used Books

**ABBY PETERSON, VP FOR
MARKETING OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE**
Tompkins Trust Company

**FRED SCHOEPS, VP
FOR TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE**
104 E. State Street, LLC
Property Owner

**MEGAN VIDLER,
TREASURER; VP FOR
BUSINESS RETENTION
AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**
Home Green Home

**BRETT BOSSARD,
SECRETARY**
Cinemapolis

ADRINA GRAHAM,
Adrina Dietra Luxury Lingerie

AMY COHEN,
Circus Culture and One Ring
Donuts

BRYAN WARREN,
Warren Real Estate

CATHY HART,
Ithaca Marriott on the
Commons

DAVID PRUNTY,
ex officio, a representative
for Ithaca College

DEIDRE KURZWEIL,
Sunny Days of Ihaca

DUSTIN PATTE,
Resident

ELSA HYDE,
Travis Hyde Properties

EMILY PETRINA,
Firehouse Architecture Lab

JAN RHODES NORMAN,
Ithacemade

JASON SIDLE,
Colivare and representative
for TC3

JODI LAPIERRE,
ex officio, Visit Ithaca

JOSEPH MURTAGH,
City of Ithaca

JUSTIN HJORTSHOJ,
Petrune

MEGAN VIDLER,
Home Green Home

NATHAN LYMAN,
Ithaca Renting

LESLIE SCHILL,
Tompkins County Legislator

SAM PARLETT,
Benjamin Peters

SETH ADAMS,
Warners Way Real Property
Services

SUSAN RILEY,
ex officio, a representative
for Cornell University

MAYOR SVANTE MYRICK,
City of Ithaca

THOMAS KNIPE,
City of Ithaca

2021 DIA STAFF

GARY FERGUSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ALLISON GRAFFIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
MARKETING DIRECTOR

DARLENE M. WILBER
COMMUNICATIONS & GRANTS
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

LORA MORROW
ART DIRECTOR

SCOTT ROUGEAU
SPECIAL EVENTS DIRECTOR

OLIVIA PASTELLA
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

KRISTINA THELEN
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

MERCEDES REDMON
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
& FINANCE

LAUREN GABUZZI
GO ITHACA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

TIM MAVROS
AMBASSADOR

LUKE SJOLUND
AMBASSADOR

JANE BRADY
GO ITHACA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

2022 DIA STAFF

GARY FERGUSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ALLISON GRAFFIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
MARKETING DIRECTOR

DARLENE M. WILBER
COMMUNICATIONS & GRANTS
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

LORA MORROW
ART DIRECTOR

SCOTT ROUGEAU
SPECIAL EVENTS DIRECTOR

DANNY PALMER
SPECIAL EVENTS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

OLIVIA PASTELLA
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

KRISTINA THELEN
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

MERCEDES REDMON
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION
& FINANCE

JANE BRADY
GO ITHACA PROGRAM DIRECTOR

CARRIE SPANTON
GO ITHACA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

IVONY ARMEL
GO ITHACA OUTREACH COORDINATOR

TIM MAVROS
AMBASSADOR

CESAR IBARRA
AMBASSADOR

LUKE SJOLUND
AMBASSADOR

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 DIA SPONSORS

Cayuga Medical Center
Cayuga Radio Group
CFCU Community Credit Union
Cinemapolis
Community Arts Partnership (CAP)
Cornell University Community
Relations
Ithaca Marriott Downtown on The
Commons
Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis

Seneca Beverage
Sound on Sound Productions
Tompkins Chamber
Tompkins Trust Company
Tompkins County Strategic Tourism
Planning Board
Wagner Vineyards
Visions Financial Credit Union
WSKG



CONTACT//

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

Phone: (607) 277-8679

E-mail: info@downtownithaca.com

www.downtownithaca.com



downtownithaca.com