



Downtown Ithaca Annual Report 2020



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, Communications & Membership Services**
- **Government Relations & Infrastructure**
- **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.

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Dear Downtown Stakeholders:

There has been no other year quite like 2020:

- A COVID-19 pandemic affecting every aspect of our personal lives and our community economy
- A nationwide reckoning for racial justice and equity
- A recession sparked by the pandemic



It was an unprecedented test of our collective spirits. Our community lost lives, businesses, and jobs. Our institutions, public, private, educational, and nonprofit, struggled under challenges not experienced in lifetimes. However, we have seemingly emerged on the other side, ready to pick up and build anew.

Like every other place both near and far, Downtown Ithaca had its share of problems to overcome. After March 15, foot traffic plummeted, at one point down 83% from the previous year. Most businesses shuttered; office operations went remote, and entertainment venues shuttered and remained closed for over an entire year. Survival was the first order of business. Some of our business brothers and sisters did not make it. Yet, a significant number of downtown businesses did indeed prevail.

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance rose to the occasion. Our team worked remotely and then staggered shifts in the office when it became possible. Our ambassador staff never missed a beat — serving as essential workers throughout the pandemic, keeping downtown clean and sanitized. Their bravery and persistence were notable. They've remained safe and healthy throughout this public health crisis. The Community Outreach Worker Team also quickly re-engaged and provided essential service and support to the growing number of people in and about downtown in need.

Our office staff mounted communications, education, and information campaigns to ensure our stakeholders were armed with the latest information and support they needed to navigate funding and assistance programs—local, state, and national. We championed a Small Business Resilience Fund that provided emergency funds to 157 businesses. We offered one-on-one and group support, and our weekly networking support meeting continues to this day.

Even our development projects prevailed. Harold's Square opened its doors, becoming a signature landmark building in the heart of our city. The Green Street Garage Redevelopment projects (Vecino's Asteri and Jeff Rimland's Ithacan projects) received their approvals to begin construction. Ithaca College made a significant announcement, committing to opening its new Physicians Assistant (PA) training program downtown. The City of Ithaca, with the financial support of Tompkins County, the DIA, the State of New York, and the Chamber Foundation and the four downtown hotels, approved the Ithaca Community Conference Center project. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a record of achievement.

As we look forward, beyond the blur of the pandemic, a reason exists for optimism for the future of downtown. A new 2030 Strategic Plan will soon be released. Development continues and business investment carries on. The fundamental assets of our downtown economy remain in place — recovery will yield to new opportunity. We are striving for that opportunity to be shared by all and embrace programs to aid the goal of greater diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We thank the DIA staff, the DIA Board, and our generous and stalwart community partners for pulling us through 2020 and positioning downtown for a future of opportunity.

Sincerely,

John Guttridge

President, Board of Directors

Gary Ferguson

Executive Director

COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

A year in pictures...



Honoring Essential Workers

Downtown Ithaca honored the essential workers who kept basic services operating in the community. Details on page 20.



Kiosks Wrapped with Local Art

Downtown Ithaca introduced kiosk art wraps to cover decommissioned electronic kiosks on the Commons. Read about the project on page 20.



New Businesses Open

New businesses still opened up for the first time ever in Downtown Ithaca. See list of new businesses on page 11.



Black Lives Matter

Ithaca embraced Black Lives Matters protests and started to chart a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.



Shops and businesses expressed support for the BLM movement even when their businesses were not open.



Creative words of encouragement could be found throughout the community in a show of solidarity.



Shops Reopened with New Safety Measures

Shops started to safely reopen with limited capacity and stringent safety compliance guidelines outlined by the county and state in place inside their place of business.



Business interiors took on new, creative layouts to ensure safe social distancing, and limited capacity was preserved in places of business.

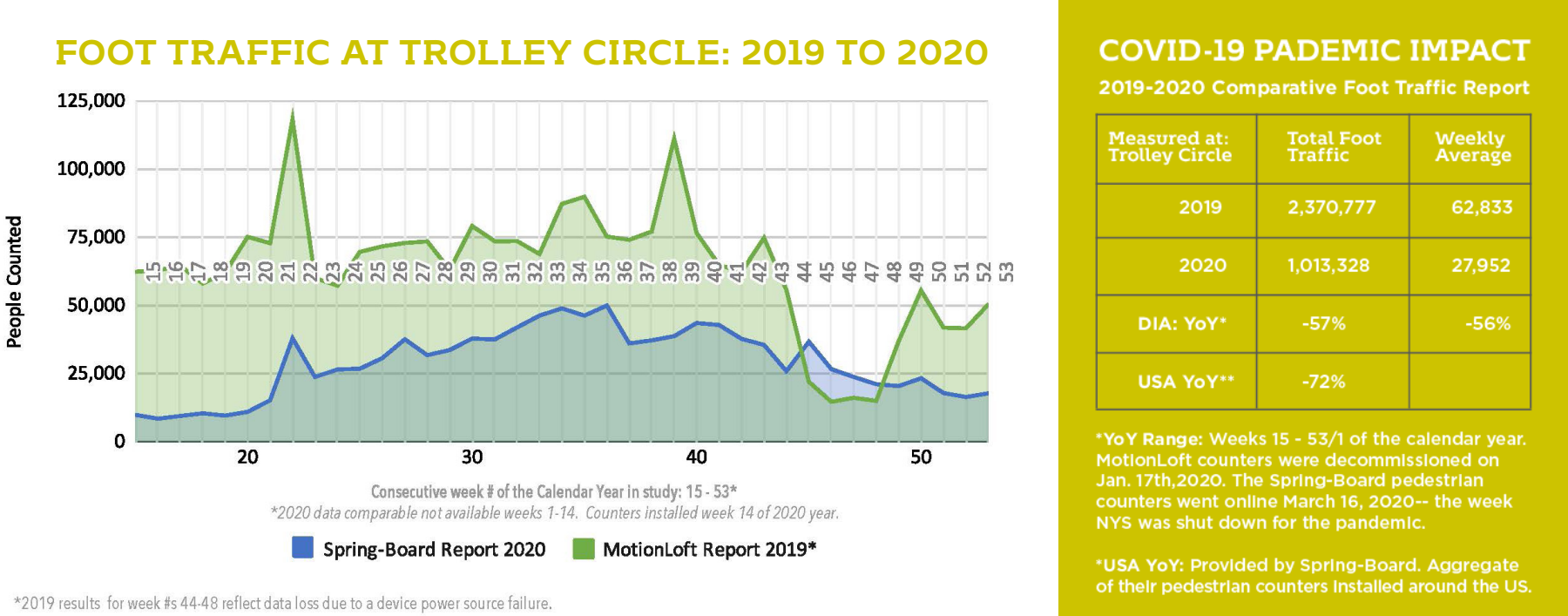


Ithaca Masked Up

The community embraced a new normal for 2020 and 2021. Wearing masks in public.

Loss of livelihood in Downtown measured by foot traffic

When the pandemic forced everything to shut down and people to stay in their homes, the effects were immediately felt to businesses and the presence of people in the community. Pedestrian Counter reports quantified the impact of loss of foot traffic in comparative data reports with the year prior.



BUSINESS RETENTION & DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Ithaca continues to be a bright light in the upstate New York landscape, 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. 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. Vecino was selected by the City of Ithaca to redevelop the garage site. It's a \$112 Million project is expected to break ground during Spring 2021. The Asteri project consists of three major components:

- **\$112 million**
- **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).

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 200 units of new housing plus 150 new parking spaces. The project will also improve office and retail space in the attached Rothschild building. Ithaca College's Physicians Assistant Master's Degree Program will be among the tenants in the renovated space. Groundbreaking for this project started late in 2020.

MAJOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2020

Harold's Square

Located at the heart of downtown on the 100 block of the Commons pedestrian mall, Harold's Square mixed- use project added new retail space to the Commons, preserving the scale of existing buildings. On the Green Street side, the project added a 12-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 was complex and the construction parameters were demanding. McGuire Development, L Enterprises LLC and LaChase Construction helped complete this significant project.

\$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

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.

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.

MORE PROJECTS

There are several other Downtown development projects that will be developed in 2021.

RETAIL SUPPORT & BUSINESS RETENTION

Throughout 2020, the DIA worked to support downtown businesses through a number of different outreach activities and marketing promotions.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT, VISITATIONS, & OUTREACH

In 2020, we continued to offer targeted technical support by meeting one-on-one with businesses for in-depth discussions on marketing, management, succession planning, and operational concerns. Due to the pandemic there was an urgent need to assist businesses in their efforts to pivot and develop new paths to communicating with customers and we worked one-on-one with 30+ individuals and the entire BID area collectively to do so.

Each year, the DIA also seeks to visit with downtown businesses to learn about their concerns, issues, and opportunities. Efforts involved weekly virtual check in meetings that included rapid changes and updates regarding closures, capacities, cleaning standards, personnel management, relief funding, and information on support/marketing efforts within the BID. The first month of the shutdown in 2020 yielded 50+ BID businesses in attendance regularly.

Immediate email updates and bi-monthly digest emails were sent to businesses to reiterate what was shared at virtual meetings and to follow up with those who could not attend. Direct outreach to check-in on PPP, EIDL and Resiliency fund programs was also conducted.

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

The Collaborative Retail Experience Grant, launched in 2019 to encourage, support, and promote unique activities in ground-level businesses with the intent to generate more presence inside downtown retail spaces continued in 2020. However, with the onset of COVID the parameters for this funding source was shifted to reflect the needs of the current landscape. The program was redefined in 2020 as an advertising, promotional, and marketing fund and temporarily rebranded it the Retail Micro-Grant Promotion. Four CREG grant recipients awarded funding prior to the shutdown reworked their projects. Six additional grants were awarded during the year with nine in total being completed by the end of 2020.

DOWNTOWNITHACA.COM, COVID-19 RESOURCE PAGE FOR BUSINESSES, ITHACA IS RESILIENT

We reformatted the downtownithaca.com homepage to host various updates to business closures and reopenings to help connect the public to downtown businesses. These temporary directories also became a "Concierge Spreadsheet" shared electronically with all tourism and hotel sites downtown to better inform guests about what amenities and businesses are available for them to enjoy during their stay.

Additionally, we partnered with the City of Ithaca and Ithacavoice.com to host on downtownithaca.com and update a GIS mapping directory of business offerings and hours of operation that was county-wide called Ithaca is Resilient.

The marketing team also launched a comprehensive Covid-19 Resource page for downtown businesses. The page included relevant, informative updates from the CDC, SBA, State of New York, County, and City of Ithaca about relief packages, webinars, re-opening processes, and vaccine information.

WEBINARS

In 2020, we produced one webinar in house to help merchants learn more about the Small Business Development Center as a local business resource before the COVID shutdowns began. Additional webinars we orchestrated were the Green Street Garage Mitigation webinar and a Building Better Bike Friendly Community webinar to help property owners and businesses create bike friendly workplaces.

During COVID, the DIA worked in partnership with several other local organizations to provide 20+ webinars to help inform and support BID businesses. Recordings of all webinars hosted in partnerships or from outside organizations were shared reliably and quickly with downtown businesses.

POP UP PROGRAM

In 2020, we launched a Pop Up Program. This latest DIA initiative is designed to provide short-term leases to help support local entrepreneurs seeking temporary spaces for their business. The 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 its inception, five businesses — Sunshine's Creative Designs, Center Cafe by Lou, Finger Lakes Bakes, The Bloomwell Holiday PopUp, and Urban Blendz — have been part of this program.

PARTNERSHIP

We once again partnered with the Tompkins County Convention and Visitor Bureau on the February 2021 Winter Recess teacher attraction promotion that featured spectacular deals on dining, shopping and services.

NETWORKING

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

PEDESTRIAN COUNTERS

Pedestrian Counters are digital devices installed at key locations around the Ithaca Commons to monitor foot traffic day in and day out. 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 in our downtown. DIA works with a company called Spring-Board, home based in the UK with US locations and service based out of California & Massachusetts.

The counters were installed in early March and went online March 17, 2020, just days before the nation went into pandemic lockdown. Using the raw data archived from the previous pedestrian counters stationed at the Trolley Circle and Aurora Street, we have been able to comparatively study the pandemic's impact to our community at the ground level.

*Comparative foot traffic data between 2019 and 2020 can be found in the COVID-19 Section of this report.

Weekly reports are available by request, please email: allison@downtownithaca.com

2019 PEDESTRIAN COUNTER REPORTS

STUDY PERIOD: March 16, 2020 - March 31, 2021

COMBINED FOOT TRAFFIC

3,360,042 | ALL LOCATIONS + ALL DIRECTIONALITY

BUSIEST:

MONTH: September 2020, August 2020, March 2021 (in order)

WEEK: August 17-23, 2020

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, 5:00PM (in order)

TROLLEY CIRCLE

1,461,824 | **DIRECTIONALITY:** Eastbound toward Aurora St., Westbound toward Cayuga St.

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

RESTAURANT ROW

1,034,268 | **DIRECTIONALITY:** North, East, South + Westbound

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

CAYUGA STREET

863,963 | **DIRECTIONALITY:** North, East, South + Westbound

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



NEW BUSINESSES IN 2020

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

The addition of these 14 new and expanded businesses has contributed continued revitalization and diversification of our community's central commercial hub.



2020-early 2021 NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES OPENED

Big Time Barber Shop

115-21 S Cayuga St, Ithaca

Cayuga Nail Spa

115 N. Aurora St.

Cayuga Creamery

215 N. Cayuga St (Dewitt Mall)

Hound and Mare

118 N. Aurora St.

Kimchi

124 E. State St. (The Commons)

Nothing Nowhere

126 E. State Street (The Commons)

LaBodega

215 N. Cayuga Street (Dewitt Mall)

Luna Love Holistic Hair Studio

215 N. Cayuga St. (Dewitt Mall)

Odyssey Bookstore

115 W. Green Street

Our Remedies

208A E. State Street (The Commons)

Ooy's Deil

201 N. Aurora Street

Sparks + Embers

118 W. Green St. (Press Bay)

The Portrait Studio

120 W. State Street

Uncle Toddy's Flea Market

215 E. State Street (The Commons)

2020-early 2021 EXISTING DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES WHO RELOCATED WITHIN THE DISTRICT:

Adrina Dietra

Home Green Home .

Nothing Nowhere

Petrune

Sunny Days of Ithaca

2020-early 2021 BUSINESS CLOSURES

The pandemic has a significant impact on our small businesses. At least 12 businesses closed permanently during the pandemic, and two businesses closed just prior to the pandemic due to owners retiring or moving out of the area.

Special Events

Special Events had to adjust greatly in 2020, with large in person gatherings on hold an emphasis was placed on smaller format but lengthier events and virtual events. Cancelled events include Ithaca Festival, Downtown Employee Appreciation Week activations, Halloween in Downtown, Santa's Arrival, and the Chowder Cook-off.



CFCU SUMMER CONCERT SERIES - A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

In 2020, our concert series shifted dramatically. For the first time, the summer concert series was presented in a 100% virtual capacity. This shift was necessary due to government and health restrictions and gathering limits during the pandemic. This year's concert series still featured 12 concerts ranging in musical styles including bluegrass, funk, soul, rock, and hip-hop. Concerts were produced from the historic State Theatre stage and broadcast over the DIA website, YouTube, and Facebook pages.

Virtual concerts actually increased the life of the concert series, with viewers being able to join at their leisure. In total, the concerts saw an estimated 37,000 views, 34,000 engagements/shares, with a total reach of over 75,000. Our most popular show was Rochester's own Danielle Ponder with over 6,500 views across Facebook, YouTube, and the DIA website.

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, Viva Taqueria, Pasta Vitto, the DeWitt Mall, and Cornell University Community Relations.



WAS: APPLE HARVEST FESTIVAL BECAME: APPLE FESTIVE

Aiming as a placeholder for the annual Apple Harvest Festival, which last drew 70,000 attendees, 2020's Apple Festive scaled back to a weeks long farmers market held on the Ithaca Commons. The farmers market saw 6 rotating produce and other farm vendors participate each day throughout the week. This return to harvest celebration roots was well received by the community and served as the inspiration for a recurring farmers market on the Commons in 2021.

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



WINTER LIGHTS & BITES

Winter Lights & Bites presented by Tompkins Trust Company combined the food and bev focused Bite of Ithaca and Winter Light Festival into a single seasonal celebration. Restaurants offered discounted fare for dine in or take out spread out over 2 weeks, while Downtown Ithaca was illuminated with a series of projected light installations.

A mix of projected and physical installations activated the Commons and surrounding streets including Sparky the Unicorn, Harmonic Lotus Temple, Infinite Bar, Holiday Tree, Santa and Snowmen on the Tompkins Trust Building, and additional interactive displays throughout the Commons. Unfortunately due to rising Covid cases within the county additional programming had to be cancelled. This entertainment was to include fire dancers, holiday caroling, lightsaber tournament, and cocoa bar.

Winter Lights and Bites were supported by the Tompkins County Tourism Program, the Hilton Garden Inn, City Centre Apartments, and Maguire Family of Dealerships.

18 Restaurants participated this year with 3 participating in the business boost opportunity.



CHILI COOK-OFF

The annual Chili Cook-Off celebrated its 23rd year in 2021. Still dealing with gathering and capacity restrictions, our traditional in-person format would not work this year. Alternatively, this year's Cook-Off learned lessons from Winter Lights and Bites, and shifted to an in restaurant promotion stretched over 2+ weeks. Chili enthusiasts were encouraged to patronize local restaurants by dining in or ordering takeout, with hopes of trying unique chili offerings and supporting our local restaurant partners.

28 restaurants participated in 2021, slightly down from traditional years seeing many restaurants who regularly participate remained closed. But a wave of first time participating restaurants (11) joined in the promotion ensuring robust options for attendees to enjoy.

This year's Chili Cook-Off winners, selected by the community through online voting: Covered Bridge Market won Best Meat Chili award, Hound and Mare won Best Vegetarian/Vegan Chili, Mama Said Hand Pies was awarded Best Chili Inspired Food, and the crowd voted the The Seabring Inn/Eat the Food as winner of the People's Choice award. 400 online ballots were cast which is comparable to in person chili cook-off voting. The 23rd annual Chili Cook-Off was presented by Maguire Hyundai Subaru Genesis.



GALLERY NIGHT

Functioning in a virtual capacity during the pandemic, Gallery Night takes place on the first Friday of each month. While gallery doors remained closed the DIA produced virtual immersive and interactive galleries to showcase local artists' work. Galleries were also encouraged to activate their window spaces for those that still wanted the walking experience of Gallery Night. As restrictions lift and doors start to reopen galleries, shops, restaurants, and other locations 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.

Downtown Ithaca Alliance teamed up with Gallery Night participants to build virtual galleries using the Kunstmatrix online software. The Kunstmatrix platform allows artists to exhibit their work from the comfort of a computer screen. Between June 2020 and March 2021, the DIA has produced 26 virtual exhibitions, showcasing over 450 pieces of work from various artists.



CANCELED EVENTS DUE TO PANDEMIC:

The following special events were canceled for Spring and Fall 2020 during the shutdown. 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
- Halloween in Downtown
- Santa's Arrival in Downtown
- Chowder Cook-off
- Downtown Employee Appreciation Week

MARKETING

The pandemic required us to shift course of all planned promotions for the year. Promotions were redrafted to encourage socially distant, low-density or no-density means of shopping, dining and awareness building.

New promotions and marketing campaigns were developed in response to the needs that arose throughout the year from Covid-19 safety guideline education campaigns to online shopping incentives. Some previously scheduled promotions were able to operate, but with modified safety precautions, while others were shifted to different times of the year or outright cancelled for the year because there was not a safe way to implement them.

PROMOTIONS

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 has continued to be an effective promotion to help businesses in downtown during an especially slow time in business and tourism. Taking place in February each year, ILT was the last promotion to occur in 2020 before the pandemic shut down and one year later was able to take place again - this time in a virtual and socially distant capacity. In 2021, ILT was stretched over 2 full 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: 1,846 redemptions recorded | 1,406 teachers registered

96.5% of teachers were from New York State with the majority visiting from counties contiguous with Tompkins.

WINTER & SUMMER SALE WEEKENDS

Downtown Ithaca organizes and promotes sales in Downtown shops 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. This year, with the pandemic, DIA provided ad hoc marketing support to help promote sales at businesses offering seasonal closeouts.

WAS: BITE OF ITHACA

BECAME:

WINTER LIGHTS & BITES

Normally held the last week of June, the annual dining promotion, Bite of Ithaca features \$5 "bites" of tasty eats at restaurants all over downtown was put on hold during the pandemic shut down. Bite of Ithaca did not take place in June 2020 as most restaurants at this time were just reopening doors with only 25% of normal occupancy and staffing level. Instead, Bite of Ithaca returned in December to help bolster holiday retail shopping and dining in downtown throughout Winter Light & Bites. Winter Lights & Bites this year was available inside limited-capacity dining rooms and also for takeaway dining as well

WAS: WELCOME STUDENT WEEKEND

BECAME: WELCOME STUDENTS 10-DAY GIVEAWAY

With most students returning for Fall semester in a virtual and remote-learning capacity, it was not possible to operate the large crowd-gathering Welcome Student Weekend as it normally would take place. In response to the Covid-19 safety restrictions and to help new students learn about businesses in Downtown, DIA organized a social media 10-day contest giveaway featuring daily gift basket giveaways to students to learn more about what stores are downtown and items they sell. A geo-fenced digital marketing campaign was targeted to deliver ads to students on Cornell University campus, Ithaca College campus, and TC3 campus.

SHOP SMALL WEEKEND: PLAID FRIDAY, SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY & CYBER MONDAY

This year in an effort to promote the holiday shopping season yet also maintain Covid-19 Safety measures, Downtown Ithaca introduced Shop Small Weekend, three shopping days promoting downtown's small, locally owned and operated specialty shops and businesses. Shop Small Weekend started the Friday after Thanksgiving - traditionally the start to the holiday shopping season, followed by Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. All three days this year encouraged customers to utilize additional shopping options like curbside and in-store pick-up or shopping online to reduce density inside stores over the holidays. 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.

DOWNTOWN EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DISCOUNT CARD

This year, all events pertaining to Employee Appreciation Week were canceled; however, the Downtown Ithaca Employee Discount Card was renewed and distributed to workers in Downtown at offices, shops, services and restaurants.

280 cards were distributed to downtown workers this year. 37 Businesses in Downtown Ithaca currently offer a discount.



OUR HEARTS BEAT AS ONE CAMPAIGN

To encourage public support for our business community through the pandemic, we established an informative and unifying rally cry, Our Hearts Beat as One.

Our campaign provided the public with information about the businesses that were open and what they were offering in terms of curbside pickup, in-person, virtual and takeout experiences. Our campaign demonstrated our solidarity as an essential area of our community that was working together in partnership to continue to provide for the needs of the community, and it showcased a need for community outpouring of financial and 'emotional' support for our downtown small businesses in need.

We devoted the main page of our website to providing sections of information regarding COVID updates and shopping, takeout, and business support opportunities available during the early part of the pandemic.

We also created an Our Hearts Beat As One event page on Facebook dedicated to listing store and restaurant re-openings and offerings during the pandemic.

WEAR A MASK VIDEO

Along with the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Tompkins County Area Development, City of Ithaca, Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Tompkins County Health Department partnered with Flair Strategic Communications to create a public service video that placed a local spin on wearing a mask during the COVID pandemic.

The video consisted of a montage of photographs showing locals wearing their masks while visiting community landmarks and popular scenic sites around the county while City of Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick delivered an educational message that stresses the importance of mask-wearing in public. The message built on Tompkins County's and Ithaca's ongoing efforts to protect residents and visitors and slow the spread of COVID.

GIFT CARD INCENTIVE PROGRAM

We put together a stimulus marketing opportunity to help incent online or tele-sales, and gift certificate sales at downtown retail shops who found meaningful ways to conduct business and provide sales to customers despite being deemed nonessential and having to close their doors to the general public.

We issued and gave to businesses deemed nonessential 10-15 Downtown Ithaca gift cards in the amount of \$5 each at no charge to the participating businesses. These \$5 gift cards were used with the express purpose of rewarding customers who shopped at local business with an additional monetary perk to shop again in Downtown.

ITHACA PROMISE CAMPAIGN

Downtown Ithaca along with its community partner organizations pledged to help make business safe for all and to demonstrate this commitment, created the Ithaca Promise. This was a public health and safety pact among businesses, residents and visitors meant to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our community and around the state.

CANCELED PROMOTIONS DUE TO PANDEMIC:

The following promotions worked in partnership with the Special Events team members were canceled for Spring and Fall 2020 during the shutdown, but scheduled to return in a socially distant and mostly virtual capacity in spring 2021.

SPRING FASHION WEEK

DOWNTOWN LIVING TOUR

DOWNTOWNITHACA.COM

Downtownithaca.com saw a drop in visitors and pageviews, and much of this can be attributed to loss of special events site traffic. Covid-19 Response content targeted for general consumer use + district members use closed helped reduce the gap, but did not close it entirely. In 2021, with new SEO & SEM strategies + the eventual return of events in some size capacity, we hope to close the gap and see growth on the site again.

APR. 2020 - MAR. 2021 ANALYTICS:

TOTAL NEW & RETURNING USERS: 114,221

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS: 263,241

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

USERS: 89,352 | -11.86%

NEW USERS: 89,817 | -9.84%

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS: 227,056 | -2.32

PAGES/SESSION: 1.95 | +12.12%

AVG. SESSION DURATION: 1.36min. | +26%

BOUNCE RATE: 59.6% | -13.8%

SITE BEHAVIOR - TOP 5 PAGES ON SITE:

HOME/INDEX: 37,857 | +5.3%

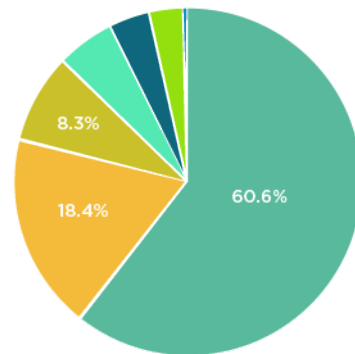
/TAKEOUTDINING: 20,820 | New Page

/APPLE-HARVEST-FESTIVAL: 19,829*

/DIRECTORY/DINING: 14,577 | -5.92%

/DIRECTORY/SHOPPING: 13,714 | -26%**

TOP CHANNEL ACQUISITIONS:



April 2020 - March 2021

Organic: 60.6%

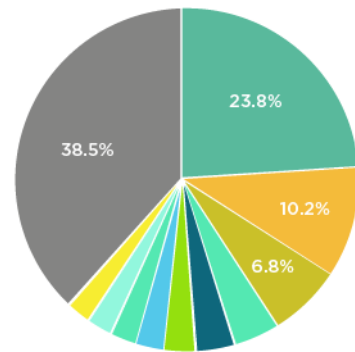
Direct: 18.4%

Referral: 8.3%

Social: 5.4%

Display: 3.8%

TOP WEBSITE REFERRALS:



April 2020 - March 2021

Facebook.com: 38.5%

VisitIthaca.com: 23.8%

IthacaVoice.com: 10.2%

IthacaPromise.com: 6.8%



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.

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

OUR HEART BEAT AS ONE: SHOP LOCAL GIFT CARD INCENTIVE DURING PANDEMIC

As a COVID-19 Response Initiative, DIA team introduced a gift card incentive to encourage locals to support local businesses. DIA provided 200 x \$5 gift cards to businesses to give away with purchase of \$25 or more in store. The incentive program stimulated \$5,000+ in sales at participating local businesses.



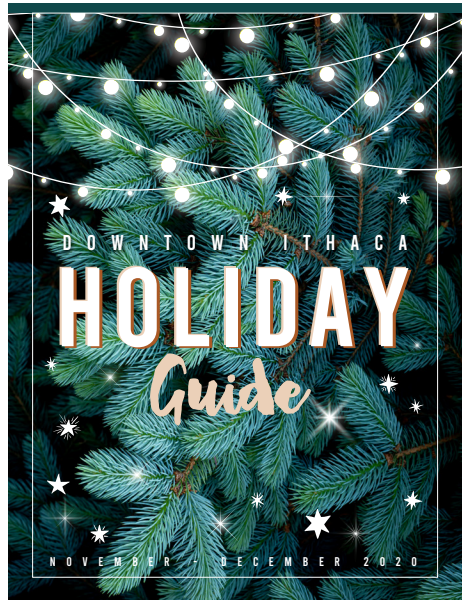
Communications



NEWSLETTERS: ENEWS, STAKEHOLDERS & TRANSPORTATION

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 individuals, including business and property owners, residents, offices, and event attendees who subscribe to the newsletter.

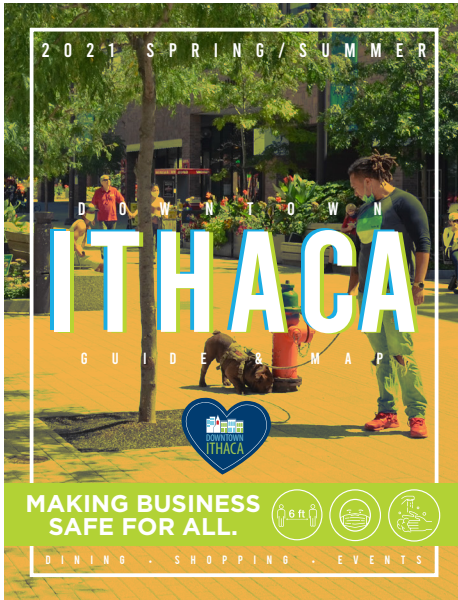
Additionally, the DIA emails Quarterly member mail newsletters geared toward BID stakeholders, merchants and restaurants, updating them on important downtown news. Plus, we provide a monthly transportation newsletter to our transportation demand management (GO ITHACA) members which provides them with information on happenings in the transportation world.



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 2020, the DIA circulated over 35,000 guides to businesses, colleges, restaurants, and hotels. Our 2020 guides also introduced a special section showcasing products available at downtown retail stores. The Fall/Winter edition featured informative Covid-19 Response information for visitors and locals.



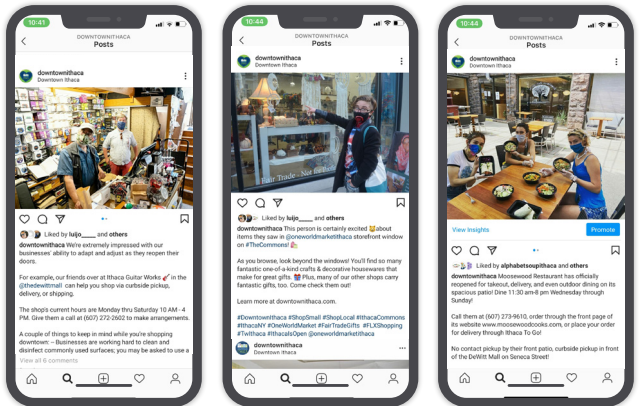
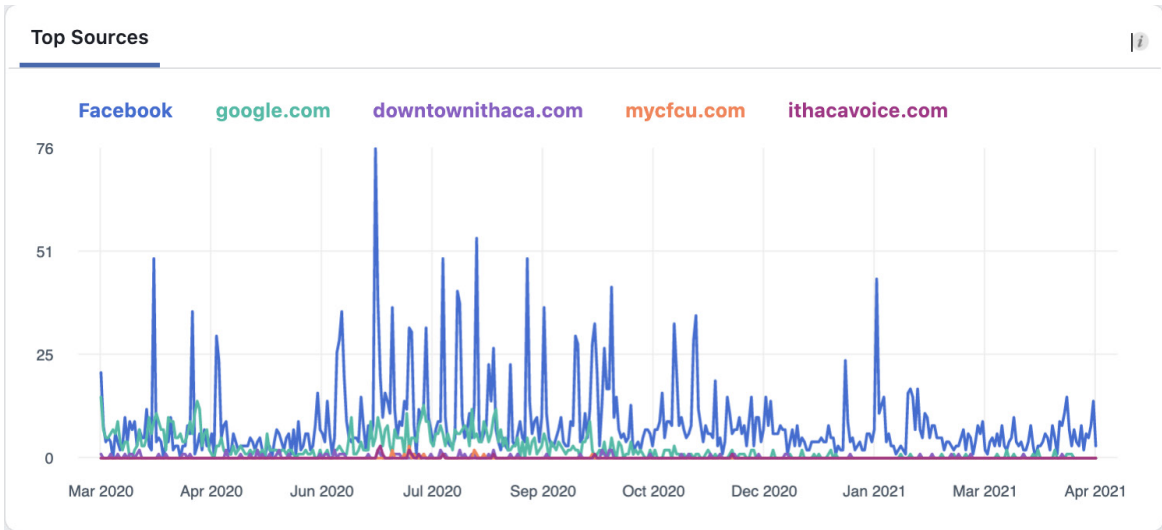
HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE INSERT

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.

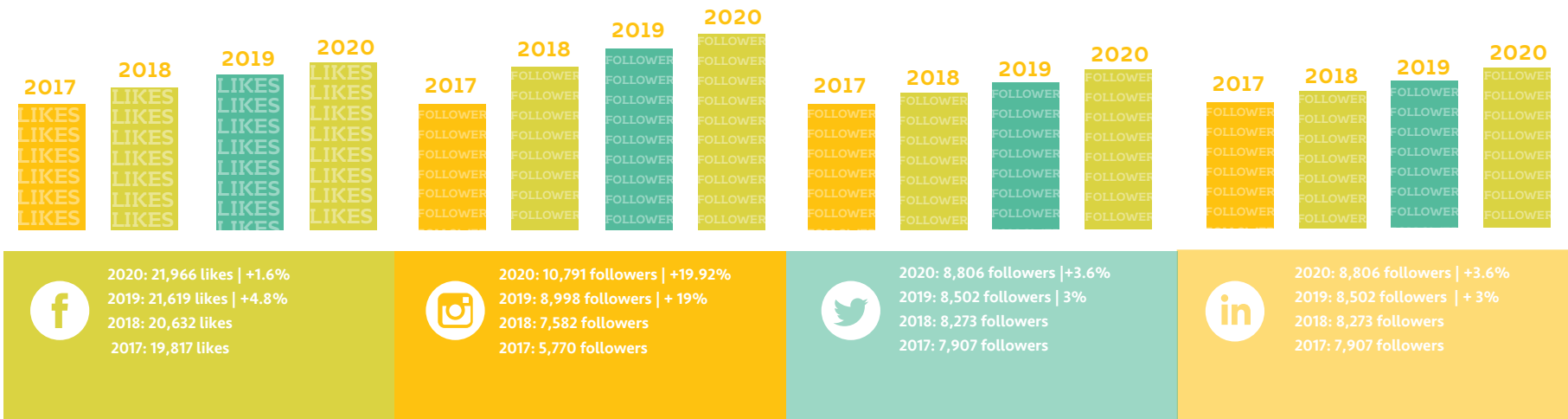
FACES OF DOWNTOWN

In 2020, 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 2021.

Social Media Insight



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.



Government Relations & Infrastructure

DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, clean team ambassadors have continued to work on a daily basis, keeping the downtown and Commons area clean and attractive. Ambassadors are also performing sanitizing work as well, to minimize danger and public health concerns for our visitors and guests. The main task has been sanitizing amenities such as crosswalk signals, waste receptacles, and other public fixtures. This work will continue as a priority as we go through our recovery process.

The clean team also 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 12 months of the year, and can be found Downtown 7 days a week!

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.

ESSENTIAL WORKERS BANNERS

For the 2nd banner installation of the year, DIA created a series of banners honoring at large the essential workers who continued to work and keep operations and essential workflow going around the community when most people were required to stay home or work from home. The banner series was tribute to their hard work and dedication to keeping the community operating through the pandemic.

HAND SANITIZER STATIONS & INCREASED CLEANING

Working in partnership with the City of Ithaca, DIA sourced and installed several hand sanitizer dispenser stations around the Ithaca Commons to help residents and visitors

have easy access to hand sanitizer. Ambassadors also expanded cleaning efforts to include frequent disinfecting of public use handrails, chairs tables and commonly touched surfaces around downtown.

CURBSIDE PICK UP LOCATIONS

Working in partnership with the City of Ithaca, DIA identified 6 curbside locations along streets in the district that could serve as temporary curbside pick-up locations. Customers could pull up and park for 15 minutes without impunity to wait for shopkeepers to bring them their purchased goods to their car. DIA provided high visibility sandwich board signs for each location. At the end of 2020, the temporary curbside pickup locations were converted into permanent curbside pickup locations with permanent signage installed by the city on street posts. These locations include one on Aurora Street, Seneca Street, and Cayuga Street to service landlocked businesses on the Commons. One on Buffalo Street and Seneca Street to service Dewitt Mall, plus one on Green Street at Press Bay Alley.

AURORA STREATERY

Covid safety guidelines severely limited 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 helped to close the 100 block of N. Aurora street to car Traffic. This allowed the restaurants to expand their outdoor dining footprint 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 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.

Also in 2020, Downtown Ithaca added a new, color-changing LED Holiday Tree. Measuring approximately 15' in height, the tree is illuminated from

every square inch! Our community enjoyed the debut of the colorful addition to Downtown just in time for Winter Lights and Bites.

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 Cowilch, 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. The two combined 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.

ITHACA COMMONS KIOSK ART WRAPS

The four digital kiosks on the Ithaca Commons were decommissioned this Springtime; however the kiosk units house important tech hardware components for the Commons operations and could not be removed entirely. To beautify these out of service machines, Downtown Ithaca wrapped the kiosks with art murals and wayfinding maps. The kiosks feature artwork by Terry Plater and graphic design by Lora Morrow. The kiosk artwork was designed to represent core values and support for the Black Lives Matter Movement as well as the LGBTQ+ community.

Transportation Demand Management

GO ITHACA TMA & TDM PLANNER DEMONSTRATION

During 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 locate

and use more affordable and sustainable modes of transportation for their commute and to complete errands. The TMA was launched in January 2020 and currently offers transportation benefits to nearly 200 individuals members and 12 businesses. It also works with the city on its policy planning for new developments.



Grant Writing & Grant Funding

The DIA leverages its BID resources by undertaking grant writing. In 2020 through April 2021, this grant writing resulted in \$525,440 in new grants and \$74,292.93 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 Program Grant; Festivals Program

Tompkins County Tourism Grant; Downtown Ambassadors Grant

Main Street Grant (Awarded April 2021)

Sustainable Tompkins Neighborhood Grant (Awarded in April 2021)

TMA/TDM PROGRAM--NYSDEC Climate Smart Communities Grant



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CONTACT//

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

Phone: (607) 277-8679

E-mail: info@downtownithaca.com

www.downtownithaca.com



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