



Advancing
Downtown
Fort Wayne
as the vibrant, urban core
of northeast Indiana

DOWNTOWN
Fort Wayne

99 Blocks to Live. 99 Blocks to Play. 99 Blocks to Explore.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the President

Michael Galbraith
President & CEO of
Downtown Fort Wayne



Hello, 2024! Looking back on 2023, Downtown Fort Wayne as an organization and Downtown Fort Wayne as a location have much to be thankful for. Our momentum as an organization continues, as does the momentum of the entire Downtown community. We saw continued growth throughout Downtown; the sight of multiple construction cranes symbolized and signaled that growth to anyone lifting their eyes upward. New businesses and residents are calling Downtown Fort Wayne home in increasing numbers in 2023. Our organization also continued to grow, folding new tasks and events into our workload. From a late-night work crew watering flowers and picking up litter to new events like Weather the Fort and Art Crawl: Alley Bash, we at Downtown Fort Wayne keep trying to respond to the ever-changing needs of our growing Downtown area.

2023 saw the introduction of a couple of new initiatives in Downtown Fort Wayne that we took great pride in shepherding to completion. The first is a Downtown Community Gift Card that allows everyone to support Downtown's local businesses. Currently honored at 38 different Downtown establishments, the card allows companies and individuals to support the entire Downtown ecosystem, including attractions, retail, restaurants and services. The second is the establishment of a Downtown DORA (Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area). Inspired by our peer cities in Michigan and Ohio, we—along with the City of Fort Wayne, Greater Fort Wayne Inc. and the Northeast Indiana Regional Chamber—leveraged the power of our Northeast Indiana delegation to guide passage of the bill allowing Indiana towns and cities to establish a DORA through the General Assembly. Recently passed 9-0 by the Fort Wayne City Council, the area will help to facilitate Downtown as the hub for entertainment, festivals and outdoor music by allowing families and friends to have alcoholic drinks in a designated outdoor area. This should be a boon not only to events and festivals but also to the businesses located in the Downtown area.

While we have much to be thankful for, we aren't ignoring that growth can have challenges. As a city, we are experiencing the burdens of increased usage by more people who live, work and play Downtown and those who do not have a home. We have been fortunate to avoid, so far, the issues plaguing major coastal cities. Still, as an organization and as a community, we are spending an increasing amount of time and resources to keep Downtown Fort Wayne's cleanliness up to par. In 2024, we anticipate an increase in demand for our Clean & Green team to respond to issues of safety and cleanliness.

Thank you to our board of directors, employees, sponsors, event attendees, and business and property owners for a great 2023. We are truly grateful to be able to work with and for you, and we look forward with great anticipation to 2024.



Staff

Michael Galbraith, President & CEO
Frank Howard, Director of Operations & COO
Preston Wallace, Director of Marketing
Rick Zolman, Events & Programs Manager
Kim McCutchan, Business Services Manager
Abigail Norton, Event Coordinator Intern
Deshawn Jones, Marketing Intern
Anthony Racic, Clean & Green Manager
Juan Vasquez, Clean & Green Technician
Clay Bowers, Clean & Green Technician
Jennifer Bauer, Clean & Green Technician

Contractors

Alexandra Hall, Director of Art This Way & Public Realm Specialist
Stephen J. Bailey, Web & Social Media Developer
Molly Conner, Web Content Writer

Board of Directors

Greg Allen, *Chair*, Premier Bank
Lorie Ailor, *Vice-Chair*, Lutheran Health Network
Miguel Trevino, *Secretary*, DLZ Indiana
Tom Ludwiski, *Treasurer*, Barrett McNagny
Zach Barrett, Barrett & Stokely
Rich Beck, Allen County Commissioners
Michelle Chambers, City Council of Fort Wayne
Pete Henry, Midwest Pipe & Steel
Ted Kucinsky, Catalyst Marketing Design
Amanda Muldoon, Hanning & Bean Enterprises
Matt Reckman, Model Group
Andrea Robinson, City of Fort Wayne
Theoplis Smith III, Phresh Laundry
Bob Walters, Downtown Property Owner
Melody Wang, Fortezza Coffee

Legal Counsel

Justin Molitoris, Barrett McNagny

Clean & Green



Clean & Green services the 99-block District and surrounding Community Corridors **6 days a week, 52 weeks out of the year**. A late-night work crew was established to take on the watering of the flowerpots as part of the Downtown Planter Program to maintain streetscape beautification. The team also provided ongoing event support and facilitated infrastructure set up/tear down for all programming.

“We were eager to start our new graffiti remediation project this year. Instead of just gray squares covering tags, we’re painting whole pillars in various colors to create a more vibrant cityscape. We’ve also found that these full-color paint-outs discourage re-tagging. We’re excited to continue this program moving forward.”

Anthony Racic
Clean & Green Manager,
Downtown Fort Wayne

37 tons

OF TOTAL DEBRIS AND LITTER COLLECTED BETWEEN OUR DOWNTOWN CORE AND NEIGHBORING BUSINESS CORRIDORS



22 **ADDITIONAL LITTER RECEPTACLES**

INSTALLED RESULTING IN A 12% DECREASE OF DEBRIS AND LITTER COLLECTION FROM 2022



110+ **GRAFFITI TAGS REMOVED FROM BUSINESS PROPERTIES**



99-block District



42,000 **TOTAL POUNDS OF DEBRIS AND LITTER COLLECTED**



5% **DECREASE FROM 2022**



Community Corridor Program

In a partnership with the City of Fort Wayne, Clean & Green continued its extended services to **13 neighboring corridors** leading into Downtown Fort Wayne.

The area includes: Wells St, Main St, Broadway St, Fairfield Ave, S Calhoun St, Spy Run Ave, Fourth St, N Clinton St, Berry St, Hanna St, Columbia St, E Jefferson Blvd and E Washington Blvd.



32,000 **TOTAL POUNDS OF DEBRIS AND LITTER COLLECTED**



20% **DECREASE FROM 2022**



To get involved with any future Clean & Green volunteer projects, please go to **DowntownFortWayne.com**.

Events

Celebrate Downtown
Weather the Fort
Fort Wayne in Bloom Window
Decorating Contest
Mother's Day Downtown
BuskerFest

Lunch on the Square
Downtown Live!
Sidewalk Sale
Art This Way Art Crawl:
Alley Bash
Fright Night

Holiday Window
Decorating Contest
HolidayFest featuring the
Night of Lights
Holly Shopping



Downtown Live!
moved locations from
The Landing to The TriCore
Porch Off Calhoun



13,630
EVENT SERIES ATTENDANCE TOTAL



**RECORD-BREAKING
ATTENDANCE!**

Night of Lights
50,000+
TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

 **5,000**
CONEY DOGS SOLD AT
CONEY ISLAND

13
PROGRAMMED EVENTS/
EVENT SERIES

18% INCREASE FROM 2022

39
TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS

11% INCREASE FROM 2022

105,803
TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

1% DECREASE FROM 2022

\$45
AVERAGE SPEND PER
ATTENDEE IN DOWNTOWN
FORT WAYNE

* Formula created with support
from Americans for the Arts
Research Division

5% INCREASE FROM 2022



\$4.3+
MILLION
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

4% DECREASE FROM 2022

Marketing

Top Ten Stories from Molly Conner

SAVOR FORT WAYNE FEATURE **3,854**

EXPLORING THE THUMB **1,613**

WOMEN AT 503 W. WAYNE ST. **1,578**

PROGRESSION OF PARKVIEW FIELD **1,249**

ELIJAH'S RESTAURANT **1,241**

24 YEARS OF CLUB SODA **1,195**

THE STRAUSS **1,024**

YOUR GUIDE TO DOWNTOWN'S SUMMER MUSIC SERIES **907**

BARTENDER SPOTLIGHT: CHONTEL JOHNSON OF PRÓXIMO **776**

ST. PATRICK'S DAY **524**

5.4+ MILLION
TOTAL DIGITAL REACH

Downtown Fort Wayne added digital billboarding / concourse ads to our out-of-home advertising strategy as part of our annual multi-media marketing campaigns.



Partnership with OUTFRONT Media:

1,931,945 TOTAL PLAYS **29,712,825** TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
89% INCREASE FROM 2022



Partnership with Fort Wayne TinCaps:

340,000 ATTENDEE VIEWS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

Website Marketing



170,458 TOTAL PAGEVIEWS
76% AVERAGE MOBILE VISITS
34% TRAFFIC INCREASE

Email/Newsletter Marketing



9,717 TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBSCRIBERS
72% SUBSCRIBER INCREASE
38% AVERAGE OPEN RATE
23% OPEN RATE INCREASE

Top Ten Webpage Views

HOLIDAYFEST 14,732	DOWNTOWN LIVE! 6,442
HOMEPAGE 13,847	MOTHER'S DAY DOWNTOWN 5,255
FRIGHT NIGHT 12,657	LUNCH ON THE SQUARE 4,425
BUSKERFEST 6,742	DOWNTOWN DINING 3,944
DOWNTOWN PARKING 6,610	SAVOR FORT WAYNE FEATURE 3,854

Social Media



108,100+
TOTAL FOLLOWERS BETWEEN ALL 5 PLATFORMS
5% INCREASE FROM 2022

FACEBOOK

8% FOLLOWER GROWTH
46,100+ TOTAL FOLLOWERS



1% FOLLOWER GROWTH
15,800+ TOTAL FOLLOWERS

INSTAGRAM

3% FOLLOWER GROWTH
36,800+ TOTAL FOLLOWERS



6% VIDEO VIEW GROWTH
200+ TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS

LINKEDIN

13% FOLLOWER GROWTH
9,200+ TOTAL FOLLOWERS

Business Services



We launched a new Downtown Fort Wayne Gift Card in partnership with Yiftee on Small Business Saturday, with an initial investment of \$4,000 in gift card giveaways. After the rollout, another nearly \$5,000 was purchased in gift cards through the end of the year.

38 LOCAL DOWNTOWN FORT WAYNE BUSINESSES ARE PARTICIPATING, AND THE LIST IS GROWING.



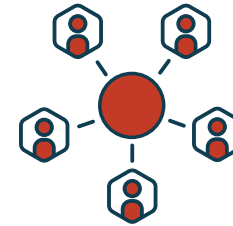
275+

BUSINESSES SERVICED AND SUPPORTED WITHIN THE 99-BLOCK DISTRICT



2

NEW BUSINESSES OPENED IN THE 99-BLOCK DISTRICT



5

TARGETED BUSINESS SECTORS
Retail • Hospitality • Residential • Attractions/Entertainment • Property Owners

Gateways for Growth (G4G) Challenge

Downtown Fort Wayne, in partnership with Amani Family Services and Greater Fort Wayne Inc., took part in the Gateways for Growth (G4G) Challenge to improve immigrant inclusion throughout the community. Through collaboration with local leaders, a robust plan of action was created, the Welcoming Fort Wayne Plan, that will be strategically implemented and executed in Fort Wayne / Allen County.

“Downtown Fort Wayne was honored to be a part of the 2023 G4G Challenge that is helping to mold the future of not only our thriving Downtown, but all of Fort Wayne, Allen County and northeast Indiana. As the vibrant, urban core of our region, Downtown has for generations represented an arena of business opportunity and a venue welcoming new ventures, ideas, and residents. As we welcome each wave of immigrants into our community, they form a growing part of the identity of Fort Wayne going forward, shaping our language, politics, business, culture, cuisine, faith and spirit.”

Michael Galbraith
President & CEO,
Downtown Fort Wayne



Convening and Collaborating

4 Business Services Roundtables

We provided an opportunity for one-on-one Q&A, networking and community building. Guest speakers included Stephen J. Bailey to discuss social media best practices and the Better Business Bureau to inform merchants of their services.

2 New Committees

We created a Business Services Committee that focuses on local retail support and a Downtown Safety Committee that concentrates on community concerns and perceptions.

Public Space Activations

“Public realm activation is vital to advancing our mission as an organization. Strategically programming these spaces helps create positive opportunities to engage and linger in our shared community, reinforcing a sense of welcoming and belonging where everyone feels empowered to pursue excellence. We look forward to even more activation in 2024!”

Outdoor Dining and Parklet Activations

Enhanced community spaces included the Wayne St Parklet, PNC Plaza, The TriCore Porch Off Calhoun, 20+ Art This Way installation locations and the Double Plus alleyway activation network.



Positive Impact

Appealing, innovative and welcoming public space activations continued to benefit local businesses and add to the rapid growth of Downtown Fort Wayne—encouraging a sense of community while connecting residents and visitors to the heart of the city, as strategically outlined in the award-winning Gehl Public Realm Action Plan.

DORA Passage

Downtown Fort Wayne, in partnership with the City of Fort Wayne’s Community Development Division, presented Fort Wayne’s first Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) to the City Council. The DORA will allow patrons to purchase alcoholic beverages from the 17 bars/restaurants and consume them within the specific footprint, which will be pivotal for outdoor events and programming in Downtown Fort Wayne. The legislation was passed by the City Council before the end of the year and sent back to the Indiana Alcohol & Tobacco Commission for final approval before implementation in spring 2024.



OUTDOORS WITHIN THE
DORA
DESIGNATED OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Any open alcoholic beverage containers purchased within the DORA must remain within the DORA.
- Possessing an open container of alcoholic beverages in a motor vehicle may constitute a Class C infraction under IC 9-30-15.
- The Downtown DORA shall be in effect during all authorized times pursuant to IC §71-3-1-14, as amended from time to time by the Indiana General Assembly, and as may be further modified by the Mayor or his or her designee in accordance with Indiana Code.

DOWNTOWN Fort Wayne

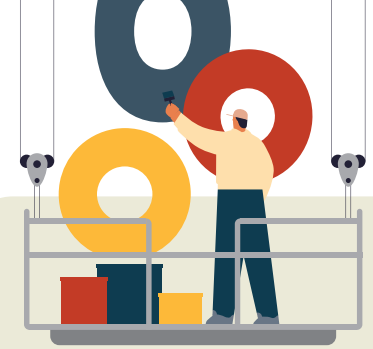
PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

Scan for the full list of rules and participating locations, or visit us at: DORAintheFORT.com

DORA Boundary

Frank Howard
Director of Operations
& COO, Downtown
Fort Wayne

Art This Way



Art This Way partnered with the Fort Wayne Public Art Commission to install 'On Wings of Hope,' a 15' wide sculpture by artists Lena Balger and Torey E Dunn II. Balger, a Ukrainian immigrant based in Fort Wayne, was inspired by a poem by Ukrainian writer, Lesya Ukrainka, titled "Contra Spem Spero". It is located within the Bill Blass Runway.



Art Crawl: Alley Bash

This educational and experiential event introduced attendees to Fort Wayne's professional creatives, including sculptors, bands, painters, print makers, and culinary wizards. Attendees enjoyed a silent disco, a 3D photo booth, food trucks, art demos, live music, and even a New Orleans-style marching band in the alleys of downtown.



5,000 TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES **50%** INCREASE FROM 2022

\$9,000 RAISED AT ART CRAWL TO SUPPORT PUBLIC ART IN DOWNTOWN FORT WAYNE

Friends of the Rivers

Alexandra Hall installed her 2,000+ square foot mural 'Protect Our Rivers' at 302 W Superior Street, adjacent to Promenade Park.

Be River SmART was a three-year collaborative initiative between Friends of the Rivers (FOR) and Fort Wayne City Utilities. The education and community outreach/engagement arm of that partnership leveraged sidewalk mural art to convey the message, "Only Rain in the Drain!"



95 TOTAL DRAIN MURALS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED OVER THE 3 YEAR INITIATIVE

3 NEW PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

Protect Our Rivers

Artists: Alexandra Hall with help from: Bonnie Andrews, Karen Bullhman, Laura Monnier, Debbie Kuntz, Lily Martin

Drain Murals

Supported by: Friends of the Rivers

On Wings of Hope

Artists: Lena Balger and Torey E. Dunn II

3,000+

SQUARE FEET OF NEW MURALS PAINTED IN DOWNTOWN FORT WAYNE

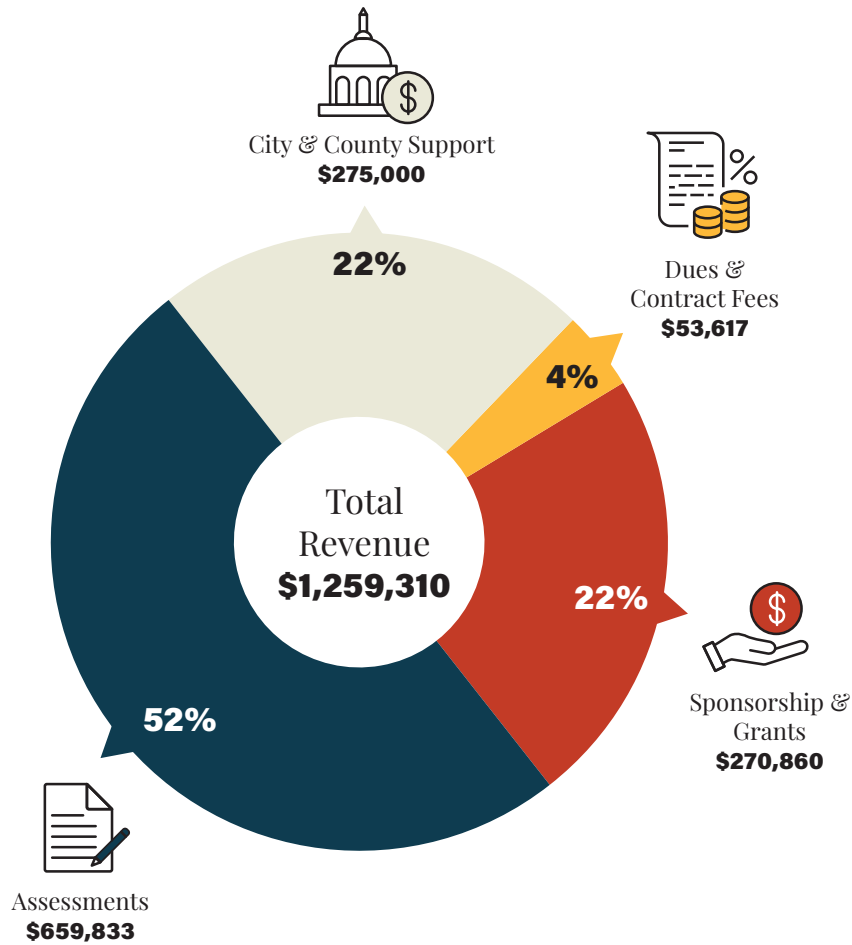
25 FRIENDS OF THE RIVERS STORM DRAIN MURALS

\$40,000+

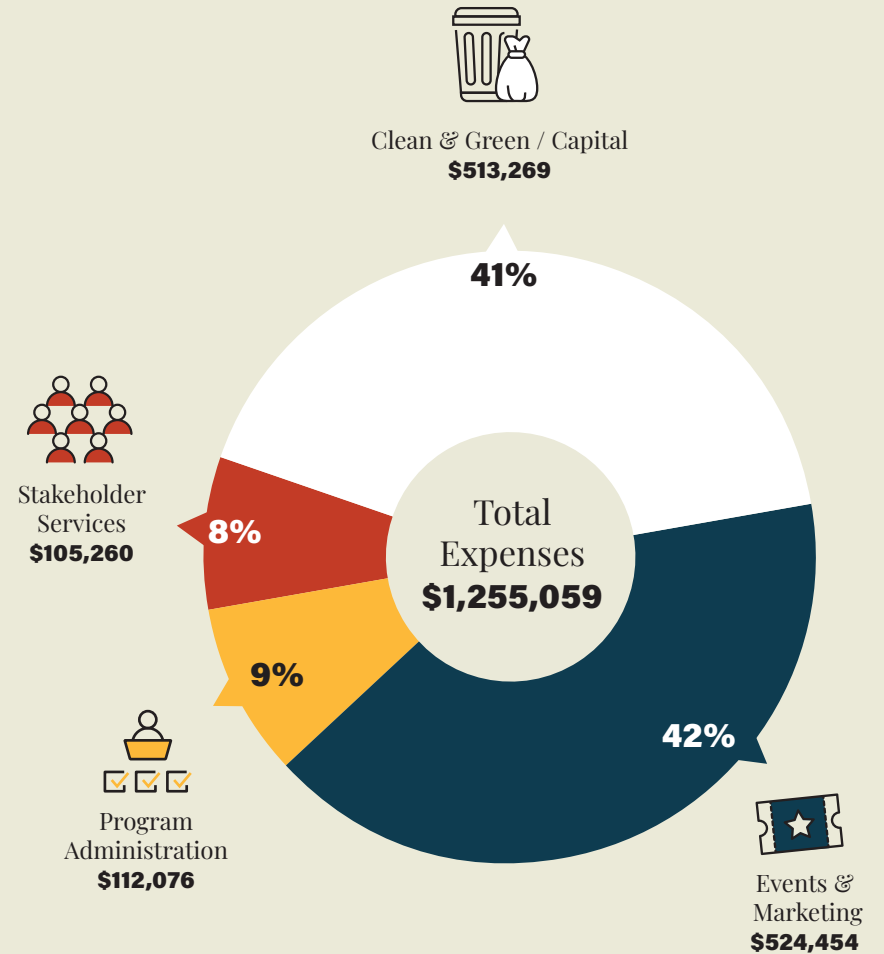
IN PROJECT-SPECIFIC INVESTMENTS FROM SPONSORS

2023 Budget

2023 Revenue



2023 Expenses



Sponsors

Partner / Presenting Level

Brightmark
Edward Jones
Federated Media
Fort Wayne Metals
Fort Wayne Newspapers
Hanning & Bean Enterprises Inc.
Indiana/Michigan Power
Model Group
Outfront Media
PNC Bank
ProFed Credit Union
TriCore
WANE 15

Gold Level

Adams Radio Group
Allen County Courthouse
Barnes & Thornburg LLP
K105 FM
Lincoln Financial Group
PNC Foundation
Premier Bank
Surack Enterprises

Silver Level

ARC Document Solutions
Centier Bank
Do it Best Corp.
Fort Wayne Recovery
Peterman Brothers
Steel Dynamics
T-Mobile
Trinity English Lutheran Church
TW Logistics

Bronze Level

3 Rivers Federal Credit Union
Allen County Public Library
Arts United/Arts Campus
Fort Wayne
Big Apple Pizza
Bona Vita Architecture
Buchanan Hauling
CSD Group
Design Collaborative
Horizon Bank
Innovative Engineering Services
JAT of Fort Wayne
JH Specialty
Palmer Trucks
Strahm Building Solutions
SVN Parke Group
Sweetwater Sound
The Joint
Union Street Market
Visit Fort Wayne
Whatzup

Art This Way Programming

Adams Radio Group
ARC Document Solutions
Bill Blass Legacy, Inc.
Dash-In
Friends of the Rivers
GLO Magazine
JK O'Donnell's
Pop Pop Balloon
Potique
TriCore
WANE 15

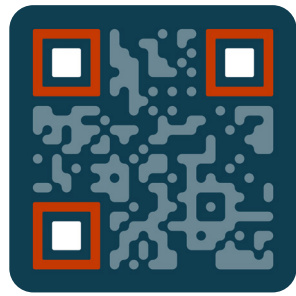


Thank You!

A special thank you
to our stakeholders,
sponsors and
community partners
in 2023. With your
support, Downtown
Fort Wayne continued
to grow as the vibrant,
urban core of
northeast Indiana.



DOWNTOWN
Fort Wayne



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DOWNTOWNFORTWAYNE.COM