

**Subject: Strengthen the Core – Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan - City Wide**

**Reference:**

Date to Council:  
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Clerk's File #:

**To:** Mayor and Members of City Council

**Recommendation:**

**THAT** Council **ENDORSE** the Strengthen the Core - Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan; and further, to address the Immediate Action Strategy:

**THAT** Council **SUPPORT** the expansion of service hours for the Homelessness and Housing Help Hub (H4) to include 6PM-12AM; and further,

**THAT** Council **SUPPORT** the expansion of Windsor Police Services to provide more visibility and enforcement within the downtown core; and further,

**THAT** Council **SUPPORT** the expansion of Auxiliary Officers in City parks and trails, and further,

**THAT** Council **SUPPORT** the addition of a dedicated Building By-Law Officer for Ward 3 for enforcement within the downtown core; and further,

**THAT** Council **SUPPORT** the addition of a Project Lead to coordinate and manage the Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan and execute the forward strategy, and further,

**THAT** Council **REFER** the required Operating budgetary increases identified and estimated to be \$3,239,878 for the Immediate Action Strategy for the Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan to a Budget Amendment process; and further,

**THAT** Council **DIRECT** Administration to monitor and report on additional action items which have been identified within this report but have no financial cost to the City; and further,

**THAT** Council **DIRECT** Administration to report on the effectiveness of the efforts made by way of the Immediate Action Strategy; and further,

**THAT** Council **AUTHORIZE** the Chief Administrative Officer and City Clerk to sign any agreements or take any such action as required to bring effect to the resolutions above, satisfactory in form to the City Solicitor, and in financial content to the City Treasurer.

### **Executive Summary:**

Over the past several years, City Council has set the stage for Windsor to thrive as a compelling hub for investment and development. However, the City's downtown core struggles with challenges, which are exacerbated by ongoing crises as being experienced across the nation - mental health and addiction issues, and homelessness. StrategyCorp Consultants were engaged in the fall of 2023 to solicit public perceptions, comments, and concerns related to the downtown. The community, including residents, service providers, business proprietors, and visitors, was encouraged to actively participate in shaping the future of downtown Windsor. These community consultations frequently noted concerns related to property damage, petty crime, social disorder, and a perceived lack of safety in the core. Stakeholder input also highlighted the need to appropriately respond to concerns surrounding homelessness, mental health and addiction, through law enforcement while providing support for service delivery partners.

Based on the findings and recommendations made by StrategyCorp, a Made-in-Windsor solution-oriented plan was tailored for the downtown. Seven action items were developed to help achieve the overarching goal of downtown revitalization; (1) Safe Streets, (2) High Standards, (3) Healthy Spaces, (4) Place-Making, (5) Vibrant District, (6) 'Our Downtown', and (7) Stronger Together.

Several initiatives are currently underway to help achieve some of the objectives within the seven action items. An immediate action strategy is proposed to help address some of the urgent priorities, which includes establishing a new Policing and Enforcement Model, dedicating a Building By-Law Officer to enforcement in Ward 3, and the expansion of hours at the Homelessness & Housing Help Hub (H4) by implementing a plan to change the perceptions of downtown by using as many tools available to the municipality and coordinating the current and future initiatives with other organizations to make a positive change. Additionally, there are ongoing efforts aimed at attaining objectives that may require further engagement from community organizations and additional resourcing.

### **Background:**

Several significant investments are contributing to the City of Windsor's current period of unprecedented growth and economic development, with the area's economy forecasted to outpace the national rate. The Conference Board of Canada projects a particularly bright economic outlook for Windsor, emphasizing its potential as the fastest-growing Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in Canada. This positive forecast is a result of Windsor's active engagement in attracting new investment, facilitated by City Council and local partners. These collaborative efforts underscore a strategic push to enhance the local economy through diverse and significant investments.

For decades, City Council has laid the foundation for Windsor to be an attractive place for investment and growth, by making strategic investments, exercising fiscal prudence, building amenities, forming partnerships, and developing innovative programs and initiatives. Council has also supported downtown by making investments in the amenities and infrastructure necessary to support private sector investment. Financial support has been provided through the adoption of the Downtown Windsor Community Improvement Plan in September of 2017, contributing to the construction of new housing units, new retail and commercial uses, and the refurbishment of vacant buildings.

In 2020, the City contracted Public First to develop an economic development study and map out a strategy that builds on Windsor's strengths: manufacturing and automotive history, proximity to Detroit, post-secondary educational institutions, culture, infrastructure, and industry partners. The resulting report, "Windsor Works - An Economic Development Strategy for the City's Future Growth", provided 40 recommendations and a comprehensive review of the City's strengths and opportunities around four themes: Location, Infrastructure, Future and Talent (L.I.F.T.).

Major investments have been made through the targeted Community Improvement Programs, the Homelessness and Housing Help Hub (H4), Windsor Essex Regional Community and Safety Wellbeing Plan, and the Home Together: Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan (HHMP). The City has been actively implementing strategies and initiatives through the HHMP and advocating for additional resources and supports from upper levels of government to continue this work. The City is also dedicated to fostering robust collaborations with the University of Windsor and St. Clair College, with several of their educational facilities located in the downtown area. New businesses, restaurants and entrepreneurs continue to establish themselves in the core. The City continues to explore next steps for a new main branch for Windsor Public Library, Festival Plaza upgrades, enhancements to the Civic Esplanade, identifying city owned parcels in the downtown core to be redeveloped for housing as part of the Housing Solutions Made for Windsor Plan, and additional valuable developments.

Despite the projected growth and fostering valued partnerships, Windsor, like many other municipalities in Canada, is facing increased challenges around mental health, addictions, and homelessness. This nation-wide crisis has been exacerbated due to the recent pandemic and significantly impacts the City's ability to create and sustain safe neighbourhoods, which are the foundation of any thriving community.

In response to these challenges, and to leverage the incredible opportunities that exist in the downtown core, the City partnered with StrategyCorp Consultants in late 2023 to undertake an in-depth consultation process with stakeholders and the public. The comments gathered played a pivotal role in guiding the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to create and sustain a downtown core that flourishes and benefits everyone. The findings of this community consultation and a proposed Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan are outlined in this report.

## **Discussion:**

### **Community Consultation and Findings**

In order to design a “Made-in-Windsor” Downtown Revitalization Plan, StrategyCorp created a robust consultation and communications strategy to engage key stakeholders. Residents, business owners, visitors, and anyone who cared to share their insights were invited to join the process to shape the future of downtown Windsor by sharing experiences, solutions, suggestions, and concerns. The goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that currently exist and offer potential solutions that could be achieved in the short and long term.

The in-depth downtown revitalization consultation process included:

- 18 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders.
- 2 focus groups with residents, businesses, and social service providers.
- A community survey yielding 3,500 responses.
- Written submissions from community organizations and individuals.

StrategyCorp used a five-layer framework to assess community needs, which included: perception of safety, governance and community partnerships, service delivery, downtown appearance and vibrancy, and community facilities and infrastructure.

The responses received from residents and visitors expressed concerns related to property damage, petty crime, social disorder, limited foot traffic, inconsistent attractions and events, vacancies in buildings and residences, and negative media attention, which have all contributed to a significant perceived lack of safety in the core. Additionally, based on stakeholder and community needs, the consultants confirmed key opportunity areas related to supporting unhoused people and individuals experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges. The findings also confirmed that the City’s service delivery partners require support.

A breakdown of consultation comments and conclusions are appended in StrategyCorp’s Key Findings and Recommendations Report in *Appendix 1. Figure 1* outlines the three key opportunity areas which emerged from StrategyCorp’s community consultation, which will require leadership from the City of Windsor, the Province of Ontario and various supporting agencies.

Figure 1 - Opportunity Areas Summary

Opportunity Area	 <p><b>Help People Feel Safe &amp; Want to Visit Downtown</b></p>	 <p><b>Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises and Those Experiencing Homelessness</b></p>	 <p><b>Better Support Windsor's Service Delivery Partners</b></p>
Related Goal	<p>Increase individuals' confidence of their safety through visible safety-related initiatives and attract more people to downtown through a mix of events, amenities, and an inviting streetscape.</p>	<p>Connect individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges with the right supports, in the right place, at the right time. Provide unhoused individuals with accessible and integrated supports that reflect their unique needs and preferences.</p>	<p>Collaborate with service delivery partners and help them develop trusted relationships with clients and deliver the best services as possible.</p>
Lead	<p><b>Windsor</b></p>	<p><b>Ontario</b> (Significant provincial investment required to address lack of services)</p>	<p><b>Windsor</b></p>

### Strengthening the Core – Action Items

The opportunity areas presented in *Figure 1* led to a series of recommendations from StrategyCorp that could be integrated into a strategy for downtown Windsor. These recommendations were reviewed by the Mayor's Office in consultation with City Administration and various external stakeholders to help create a solutions-oriented plan by effectively integrating what is essential and feasible.

The development of a Made-in-Windsor solutions-oriented plan focused on the following goals:

- Improve downtown Windsor's perception, physical condition, and image.
- Help businesses, customers, and residents feel more confident for their safety.
- Connect individuals to appropriate supports where and when needed.

To address these goals, seven action items were identified in the Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan and are outlined in *Figure 2* below.

Figure 2 – Initial Action Items

## Initial Action Items Downtown Revitalization Plan

- 1 Safe Streets**  
Implement a **strong enforcement focused strategy** to support safer streets.
- 2 High Standards**  
Increase **enforcement of property standards** and **fill vacant buildings**.
- 3 Healthy Spaces**  
Foster **strong community partnerships with appropriate health organizations** to help alleviate the strain on underequipped emergency services.
- 4 Place-Making**  
Encourage people and businesses to **locate downtown**.
- 5 Vibrant District**  
Create vibrancy by **attracting and engaging residents and visitors**.
- 6 'Our Downtown'**  
Enhance community engagement and **implement a marketing strategy to celebrate and promote the core**.
- 7 Stronger Together**  
**Convene a table** designed to improve collaboration, trust-building, and open communication between mental health and addictions service provider leadership, and all relevant stakeholders.

Each of the seven proposed action items are tied to a full list of objectives as detailed in *Table 1*.

Table 1 – Seven Initial Action Items - Strategy and Objectives

## 1 - SAFE STREETS

Throughout the downtown consultation and engagement process, participants consistently expressed a desire for an increased sense of safety. Incidents of property damage, petty crime, and social disorder are frustrating business owners and many members of the community. An increased confidence of safety in the downtown will attract more visitors and businesses to the core.

An important component of promoting safe streets includes implementing a strong enforcement focused strategy. One of the ways this can be achieved is through a police response model focused on sustained high visibility and collaborative cross-sectoral response.

This new Policing and Enforcement Model would include:

- 1.1. Expanding the Windsor Police Service City Centre Patrol Team (CCPT) by an additional 12 sworn officers. The CCPT will continue to operate inside their current designated geographic area but under their own command unit to allow for enhanced focus and to improve resource allotment in the downtown.
- 1.2. Assigning a Crime Analyst to the CCPT to appropriately collect information and data which will drive both daily and strategic planning decisions to assist in directing resources when and where most needed. (i.e. prime shopping and entertainment times, evening establishment closing times, and larger event coverage).
- 1.3. Appointing a Community Liaison Officer at a supervisory level to provide effective communication with stakeholders and facilitate regular community engagement.
- 1.4. Implementing a team approach between the CCPT, Neighbourhood Officer Program, Problem Oriented Policing Unit, Windsor's By-Law officers, 311 and other enforcement entities (i.e. AGCO, Windsor Fire & Rescue, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services (EMS), etc.) to facilitate better communication, and to address crime, disorder, and quality of life issues.
- 1.5. Expanding and providing additional resources, within the Nurse Police Team, Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team, and the Patrol Outreach Team, under the purview of CCPT. This coordination will provide the required daily services to the impacted population to minimize negative impacts on residents and businesses, while reducing the stress on health care facilities in the core.
- 1.6. Expanding and formalizing Windsor's SafeStreets test pilot; a public-private-community partnership that blends a mix of real-time crime-fighting and community policing with cameras installed on private property that are monitored with the consent of property owners to better allocate and target more timely police resources for quicker response and to deter those contemplating criminal activity.
- 1.7. Dispatching a mobile lighting and camera unit to be deployed in known problem areas, to deter repeat criminal activity and disruption to residents and business owners.
- 1.8. Utilizing 311 to improve the manner in which residents receive information and assistance, with 311 staff assisting community members in understanding available supports for individuals who are unhoused or experiencing a mental health and/or addiction crisis.
- 1.9. Installing additional security lighting in alleys, and in dark areas throughout downtown to improve visibility and safety while deterring criminal activity.
- 1.10. Discourage loitering on medians and in front of empty store fronts and residential buildings in the downtown core.
- 1.11. Increase number of Auxiliary Police within parks and trails in the downtown core.
- 1.12. Relocate city benches away from vacant store fronts and buildings to discourage loitering and public intoxication.

## 2 - HIGH STANDARDS

High standards are critical in maintaining a vibrant district with a high quality of life. The visual perception of the downtown core can be improved through increased enforcement of property standards and working to fill vacant buildings. Further, maintaining a clean and attractive environment will be critical in achieving a downtown that meets high standards.

The following actions are proposed to help increase the standards of the downtown core:

- 2.1. Appoint a dedicated Ward 3 Building By-Law Property Standards Enforcement Officer to lead enforcement in the downtown core and surrounding area.
- 2.2. Engage all relevant City of Windsor departmental teams to create or modify existing by-laws, including the Interim Control By Law for building demolitions, to encourage through education and enforcement maintenance of vacant commercial, residential buildings and their surrounding lands.
- 2.3. Encourage and promote the use of financial incentive programs that are a part of the Downtown Windsor Enhancement Strategy and Community Improvement Plan to support the maintenance and updating of vacant residences and buildings (i.e. façade improvements, space conversion, etc.).
- 2.4. Expand definition of "Safety" to look at impact of buildings that are not at an adequate standard.
- 2.5. Support enforcement of City by-laws relating to maintaining property standards. Ex. replacing broken windows, landscaping, or other property elements when there is non-compliance.
- 2.6. Explore the possibility of making a public list of properties that have orders against them.
- 2.7. Work with utility companies more effectively to identify vacant buildings and to ensure utilities are turned on.
- 2.8. Review current CIP programs to provide additional financial incentives to existing and prospective downtown business owners/operators to update properties over the short-term (18 months).
- 2.9. Increase administrative fees for full cost recovery associated with applying enforcement against owners of sub-standard vacant buildings and properties for unkept properties.
- 2.10. Proactively contact landlords and property owners to inform them of available incentives to develop and activate their properties.
- 2.11. Streamline the City grant application process easier and approval time quicker for applications made under the Downtown Windsor Enhancement Strategy and Community Improvement Plan.
- 2.12. Enhance City-owned properties located in the core (i.e. parking garages, parkettes, etc.).
- 2.13. Upgrade and increase the amount of garbage receptacles and improve the frequency of garbage collection in the core to discourage rummaging and litter.



### 3 – HEALTHY SPACES

The City of Windsor is unable to fully support the human and financial resources required to implement and operate support programs and services for vulnerable community members. It is going to take a community response. Advocacy to upper levels of government is vital to support wrap-around relief programs within the downtown core. Furthermore, fostering strong community partnerships with appropriate health organizations will help to alleviate the strain on underequipped emergency services.

The following actions are proposed to support healthy spaces within downtown:

- 3.1. Advocate to the federal and provincial governments for the funding required to implement and expand social service initiatives based on each government's area of responsibility and priorities, recognizing that municipal governments do not have the fiscal capacity to address these challenges alone.
- 3.2. Bring together local health leaders to determine the best approach to secure provincial funding for a low-barrier, transitional care facility where individuals experiencing an immediate mental health and/or addictions crisis can be provided with care tailored to their needs.
- 3.3. Advocate for long-term provincial funding for Windsor Police Service and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare to help extend their M.C.R.R.T. and MHART programs.
- 3.4. Advocate for long-term provincial funding for Windsor Police Service and Windsor Regional Hospital to help make their Nurse and Police Team pilot project permanent and to extend its hours of operations.
- 3.5. Extend H4 hours of operation to ensure people who are unhoused have a facility they can access prior to the opening of overnight emergency shelters.
- 3.6. Evaluate whether barriers exist for people experiencing homelessness to accessing H4 in its interim state, and work to minimize any identified barriers where possible.
- 3.7. Continue work to implement strategies in the Home Together: Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan.

## 4 – PLACE MAKING

Downtown is home to many valued businesses and offers a wide array of housing. However, there are still many significant opportunities for growth and the need for increased development, more specifically housing.

By providing a mix of housing types, including apartments, condominiums, and mixed-use developments, downtown Windsor will accommodate residents of different income levels and lifestyles, fostering a more equitable and accessible urban environment. Further, supporting the establishment of various types of businesses, including retail shops, restaurants, and professional services, placemaking supports a dynamic and resilient local economy that is supported by visitors and local residents.

The following recommendations are centered around place-making within downtown:

- 4.1. Explore additional housing options downtown through the Housing Solutions Made for Windsor plan.
- 4.2. Increase awareness and engagement with existing CIPs that have been established to support growth in the downtown core.
- 4.3. As part of the current CIP and incentives review, identify additional and refine existing policy and financial incentives to encourage developers to build downtown and/or to convert existing buildings into residential units.
- 4.4. Support the DWBIA in their efforts to attract new businesses and anchor tenants downtown (i.e. grocery stores and restaurants).
- 4.5. Encourage employment opportunities downtown to create foot traffic.

## 5 - VIBRANT DISTRICT

Windsor's downtown has a rich history and significant potential to become an improved attraction for the City. To increase vibrancy, it is important to attract more residents and visitors to experience all the amenities and establishments in the core. Many community members indicated that there is often limited foot traffic downtown due to minimal and/or inconsistent attractions, events, and facilities.

The following objectives are proposed for Vibrant District:

- 5.1. Collaborate with partners, including the Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Area (DWBIA) to facilitate partnership opportunities for existing and new events to encourage post-event spillover into downtown businesses.
- 5.2. Simplify the City Hall event approval process and assess all event related fees to help attract more event operators.
- 5.3. Investigate options to enhance/improve existing event venues to attract a diverse range of events and activations, and to maximize event attendance.
- 5.4. Continue making improvements to streetscaping to create a more welcoming atmosphere in the core.
- 5.5. Add decorative lighting to create a warm ambiance downtown while also providing additional visibility and a greater sense of safety.
- 5.6. Work with the DWBIA and existing landlords to stimulate activation of currently vacant commercial spaces (i.e. Pop-up stores and events), and to promote existing events and activities that draw residents downtown.
- 5.7. Continue to move forward on Council endorsed projects including Festival Plaza, Civic Esplanade, Legacy Beacon, and City Hall Ice Rink.

## 6 - 'OUR DOWNTOWN'

Establishing a stronger sense of community will make the downtown core an ideal place to visit and live. Windsor's downtown should be celebrated and promoted to help attract and welcome all individuals.

Community engagement can be enhanced by undertaking the following:

- 6.1. Work collaboratively with Tourism Windsor Essex and the DWBIA to create and launch a marketing campaign – 'Our Downtown' – aimed at sharing the positive stories and highlighting the successes of the downtown core, in the words and from the mouths of downtown community stakeholders.
- 6.2. Profile businesses, business owners, landlords and residents in and from downtown
- 6.3. Build on existing community engagement with downtown stakeholders and community members to make the downtown streetscape feel more welcoming and safer.

## 7 – STRONGER TOGETHER

The Windsor community, like all communities, becomes stronger when there is increased alignment and collaboration between stakeholders. It is also proposed that a table be convened to improve collaboration, trust-building, and open communication between mental health and addictions service provider leadership.

The following is proposed to strengthen and build new partnerships:

- 7.1. Convene a table designed to improve collaboration, trust-building, and open communication between mental health and addictions service provider leadership and all relevant stakeholders.

The table would:

- Identify opportunities to enhance information sharing, address gaps and limit duplication in services, increase efficiencies, and allocate resources effectively.
- Strengthen coordination between City staff, its partners, and regional leadership via the City's community safety and well-being infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities to improve city processes and reduce red tape to allow delivery partners to operate effectively.
- Create public and transparent goals and a process for ongoing evaluation.
- Expand programs to meet client needs.

## **Immediate Action Strategy and Initiatives Underway**

Many significant objectives are proposed within the seven initial action items for the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Additional resources, analysis, budgeting and coordination will be required to realize the action items of the plan, as outlined in the Forward Strategy section of this report. Meanwhile, an immediate action strategy is proposed to address matters that demand urgent attention and initiatives that are already underway. The elements of this immediate action strategy are outlined below.

### ***Safe Streets – Initiatives Underway***

Collaboration amongst several community partners and groups, and additional funding, is required to achieve a better perception of safety and increase confidence in the core. Initiatives are currently being explored to help address some of the objectives for Safe Streets are outlined below.

#### *New Policing Enforcement Model (Objectives 1.1-1.6)*

Implementing a strong enforcement focused strategy and high visibility policing model is a key component of the Safe Streets objectives. As part of the plan, it is proposed that the Windsor Police Service City Center Patrol Team (CCPT) be expanded by 12 additional sworn officers. This will allow for improved resource allotment within the downtown. Furthermore, as part of the plan, assigning a Crime Analyst to the CCPT will assist in directing resources during high traffic events or entertainment venues within the downtown.

A collaborative cross-sectoral response between Windsor Police and other stakeholders is critical in achieving Safe Streets objectives in the downtown core. The assignment of a Community Liaison Officer in a managerial capacity will enhance consistent community involvement and ensure efficient communication with stakeholders.

The total estimated annual cost for the expanded team is \$2,076,000, with \$1,384,000 required in 2024. There is currently no funding identified for this proposal. Details are further outlined in the Financial Matters section.

#### *Addition of Auxiliary Police (Objective 1.11)*

The Auxiliary Police is a year-round program managed by Windsor Police Services (WPS) where Auxiliary Officers provide patrol and security services for special events throughout the City. A uniformed presence helps to curb acts of mischief such as graffiti and damage, address common issues including the enforcement Parks Bylaw 131-2019, ensure that city amenities and facilities are being utilized as they are intended, and provide a sense of safety for the public. The Auxiliary Officers also provide a direct link to the Police Service when necessary.

An increased presence of auxiliary police can facilitate an important aspect of achieving safer streets. In May 2023, City Council asked the following Council Question (CQ 15-2023):

*Asks to have the city look into more auxiliary police being used on a regular schedule in our public parks and trails. A report back on costs and risks involved.*

In response to this CQ, Administration reviewed the additional funding that would be required to expand the Auxiliary services.

Auxiliary Officers are currently contracted by the City to monitor various high-priority parks and trails seven days a week during the months of May until approximately September. This service includes approximately 18-20 Auxiliary Officers. Generally, but depending on staff availability, Auxiliary Officers patrol in teams of two, for safety reasons, for 4-hour shifts typically in the evenings. When resources allow for it, day shifts occur on weekends.

While patrolling City parks and trails, these officers dedicate more time to parks considered high priority. There are currently 7 high priority parks identified by WPS and the City as a whole and include Jackson Park, Dieppe Park, Mitchell Park, Lanspeary Park, Forest Glade Park, the Riverfront Trail, Festival Plaza, and Willistead Park. These are considered a priority based on factors such as volume of use, community driven calls/complaints, previous challenges at those parks and discussions with City Administration.

To increase the regular schedule of Auxiliary Officers in the downtown core Windsor Police Services advised that, due to the staff availability and attrition rate constraints, they would need to increase the current complement of Auxiliary Officers. The Riverfront Trail and Festival Plaza are identified within the list of high priority parks where Auxiliary Officer presence could be increased.

Expanding the regular schedule and adding more Auxiliary Officers would require hiring, screening, training, paying, and outfitting these officers and in addition, there would need to be an increase to the current City budget utilized to fund this service. The cost to enhance the Auxiliary Officer complement is estimated at \$217,000 as outlined in the Financial Matters section of this report.

#### *Enhancements to the Nurse Police Team (NPT) (Objective 1.5)*

The NPT, which pairs nursing professionals from Windsor Regional Hospital (WRH) with frontline police officers, offers proactive care to those struggling with mental health and addictions. This initiative started as a pilot in May 2023 and has recently been expanded into early 2024. Since its launch, the NPT has helped a total of 488 individuals, resulting in 172 cases where individuals were diverted from seeking emergency department care. Currently the NPT program operates on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m. The NPT has successfully reduced the number of repeat visits to the Emergency Department amongst high service users.

While WPS and WRH are pursuing long-term funding, they are also actively working to enhance the services currently offered by the NPT. They are in the process of training additional police officers and nurses to permanently extend NPT coverage to 7 days a week. Currently, hospital nurses and supplies are provided for the program at no cost to the City.

Expanded number of CCPT officers will be allocated and ready to integrate with any additional nursing teams.

#### *Lighting, Surveillance and Garbage Collection (Objectives 1.7, 1.12, 2.13)*

Several physical and urban design changes can be made within the downtown area to increase a sense of safety and provide additional community protection. Mobile lighting and camera units could be installed and relocated as required to specific areas which are shown to be problematic. Adding these physical resources will help increase surveillance, deter crimes, and increase public confidence in the downtown core.

Strategically relocating City benches within the downtown core can provide an increased sense of safety. Vacant buildings can attract criminal activity, vandalism, or squatters, and moving city benches away from vacant storefronts to areas with higher traffic will help mitigate concerns related to vandalism, theft and better preserve public spaces.

Administration is also working with the DWBIA to upgrade and increase the amount of garbage receptacles and monitoring the collection frequency needed in the downtown core using bin sensors. Upgraded garbage receptacles will improve the cleanliness of downtown, reduce litter and discourage rummaging.

There is currently a placeholder in the amount of \$1,000,000 set aside in the 2024 10-year capital plan. This amount will be utilized to initiate improvements that will address this objective. Should City Council support this plan, Administration will undertake to refine the cost estimates for the noted capital improvements and allocate the placeholder funding to maximize value within the existing funding available. It is acknowledged that there will be an element of ongoing operating and maintenance required for the noted improvements. At this time, an amount cannot be estimated as this will depend upon the nature and the anticipated life cycle of the capital expenditure. At this time, it is not anticipated that significant additional funding will be required in 2025, however Administration will ensure that any operating or maintenance expenditures are brought forward in future budget submissions for consideration.

#### *Windsor's Project SafeStreets (Objective 1.6)*

Windsor's Project SafeStreets Pilot was launched in August 2023 with four high quality live cameras installed at private businesses in the downtown core. Through a partnership between business owners, the Downtown Windsor BIA and ACS Security, Project SafeStreets offered stakeholders an opportunity to

see if monitored cameras would have an impact on safety and security in the core. Since its inception less than a year ago, the Downtown BIA and its partners have found a significant reduction in crime in the pilot areas. As a result of real-time information, police have been able to react quickly to situations unfolding in traditionally unmonitored sections of the downtown. The footage obtained from the monitoring has also proven to be useful for police to solve incidents involving criminal activity. Further, they have found that the cameras provide a much-needed opportunity to provide immediate assistance to people who are in crisis and in need of emergency care. While the pilot was limited to four businesses, the Downtown BIA has had many requests from members to be included in the program, with one business investing in their own camera system. There is potential to expand this program.

### ***High Standards – Initiatives Underway***

High design standards contribute to the visual appeal of the downtown area, creating an attractive and welcoming environment for residents, visitors, and businesses. Minimizing vacancies and ensuring aesthetically pleasing streetscapes and storefronts can also positively impact the economic vitality of a downtown area. As part of the immediate action strategy, a dedicated by-law officer for Ward 3 is proposed.

#### *Dedicated By-Law Property Standards Officer for the Downtown Core (Objective 2.1)*

Vacant properties often become eyesores, attracting vandalism, illegal dumping, and other criminal activities. A dedicated Building By-Law Enforcement Officer for Ward 3 can proactively monitor these properties, ensuring they adhere to local regulations regarding maintenance and safety. This includes reviewing issues such as signs of forced entry, broken windows, doors, general building maintenance such as functional eavestrough and intact roofing, façade/building envelope condition, and any issues that may be of cause for concern to the life safety of people who may enter a building or be nearby. These overall building conditions would be reviewed on an on-going basis by the dedicated Ward 3 Building By-Law Enforcement Officer to protect the public and to reduce building deterioration. By actively addressing vacant properties, the enforcement officer plays a vital role in fostering a safer and vibrant community.

Based upon current salary schedules, the estimated annual cost for an additional officer is \$96,620 inclusive of fringe benefits. In addition to salary costs, a further \$16,970 would be required for required vehicle, uniform, personal protection, and communication equipment. The 2024 operating impact in support of this objective is \$81,383.

## ***Healthy Spaces – Initiatives Underway***

Mental health professionals and social workers are often best equipped with the skills to address the complex and multi-layered needs of individuals experiencing poverty or in mental health crisis. Police officers are skilled in de-escalation techniques but lack the comprehensive training in clinical intervention that social workers and health professionals possess. Expanding mental health and community services is key in ensuring that qualified professionals are available in times of crisis and to help achieve healthy spaces.

The information outlined in the sections below provides information on programs and partnerships which are underway or being explored to address objectives of Healthy Spaces.

### *Homelessness and Housing Help Hub (H4) Hours Expansion (Objective 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7)*

The H4 began as a response to the pandemic in April 2020 and since that time has operated from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days per week. Services provided at the H4 include assistance to find appropriate housing, low-barrier access to episodic medical and primary care, and access to justice, addiction and income supports to improve the wellness of people experiencing homelessness. WPS has recognized that the H4 has greatly assisted police officers, as it provides them with an additional location to refer people experiencing homelessness who are not in acute crisis during regular business hours. This unique housing and wrap-around service model has been identified as a best practice and is starting to gain traction in other municipalities throughout the province.

Given the recent \$1.1M Reaching Home announcement for Winter Unsheltered Homelessness Response Funding (Nov. 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024), Administration took this opportunity to use some of the one-time funding to expand the hours at H4 from 6pm to 11:30pm daily. In addition to supporting the basic needs for people experiencing homelessness during the winter, the H4 offers the WPS an alternate location to refer persons experiencing homelessness and requiring support after hours.

Since the hours were expanded in February, H4 has supported over 4,400 visits to the site by 612 known unique participants and 557 anonymous participants. Participants have ranged from those who are often staying in the emergency shelter system to those who remain outdoors or temporarily with family and friends. Feedback received to date has acknowledged that H4 has provided access to washroom facilities, an alternate safe space to go while also providing assistance with housing, particularly for those who may not engage with the emergency shelter system. The expansion of hours has also provided an avenue to provide support for those who may have restrictions in place preventing them from accessing other community supports. Given the successes experienced in this short period of time, coupled with the feedback received from the Downtown Revitalization survey results, WPS and DWBIA, Administration is



recommending that the hours be permanently expanded from 6pm to 12am seven days a week.

Building on the success of the current H4 model, City Council unanimously endorsed a permanent Housing Hub concept in late 2022 that would include the multi-sector service drop-in hub offering supports related to housing, health, income and justice services, along with a minimum of 64 units of highly supportive housing units designed to support some of the highest acute individuals in the community experiencing homelessness. The City is currently in pursuit of identifying a property and securing the necessary capital and operating dollars to bring this concept to fruition.

Total estimated annualized costs for expanded hours and services is \$2,205,511. There is currently no funding identified for this initiative. An amount of \$1,470,340 would be required in 2024 as further as outlined in the Financial Matters section.

*Advocate to the Federal and Provincial Governments (3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4)*

Administration continues to advocate to upper levels of government for additional financial support through its member associations including the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), as well as directly to the ministries responsible to support people experiencing homelessness including but not limited to the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and Government of Canada's Infrastructure Canada (INFC).

***Place Making – Initiatives Underway***

Downtown Windsor can become a center of choice by further encouraging people and businesses to move downtown. This can be achieved as part of the Housing Solutions Made for Windsor and Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and incentives review.

*Housing Solutions Made for Windsor (Objective 4.1)*

Recently, Administration identified a list of municipal lands owned by the City of Windsor that could be disposed of with the goal of increased housing. This list has been approved by Council to be made shovel-ready for residential development. Two of the identified properties are parking lots within the downtown area, namely the Caron Avenue Parking lot at 0 Caron Avenue (Caron & University Avenue West) and the Pelissier Street Parking Lot at 0 Pelissier. Further lands will be identified and brought forward as appropriate, which may include some properties within or surrounding the downtown core.

*The Downtown Windsor Community Improvement Plan Review and Refinement (Objective 4.3)*

The Downtown Windsor Community Improvement Plan (Downtown CIP) was approved by City Council on September 29, 2017 and an adopting by-law was

passed by City Council on October 16, 2017. The Downtown CIP provides financial incentives to encourage new residential development, retail investment, facade improvements, and building/property improvements. These may include one-time grants as well as property tax incentives to assist property owners with the costs incurred.

The current plan has been well received with many applications being approved. Council has approved 35 grant applications for various revitalization projects (i.e. – facade improvements, new residential units, building/property improvements) under the Downtown CIP supporting an estimated private investment of \$128,462,895.

A review of the current plan is in progress with a view to enhance the financial incentives, and in particular, property tax incentives, where development can be linked to this strategy. The review also provides the opportunity to evaluate the overall effectiveness of Downtown CIP, considering its impact on achieving the stated objectives of the CIP and the recommendations from the a “Made-in-Windsor” Downtown Revitalization Plan. Finally, the review will provide Council with the opportunity to make changes to the CIP, to facilitate many of the placemaking principles highlighted above. Capital funding of \$150,000 has been approved as part of the 2024 10-year Capital Plan to assist in the review of various CIP’s including the Downtown CIP.

## **Forward Strategy**

The Downtown Revitalization Plan encompasses a multitude of objectives, of which some require careful consideration and planning before implementation. Given the scope of these objectives, a comprehensive review with Administration will begin to refine and establish the processes required if the proposed plan is approved.

Furthermore, the execution of this plan requires a significant amount of coordination, oversight, tracking and reporting to ensure success. This includes integrating the seven initial action items into a cohesive framework for action. A Project Lead position is proposed within the Economic Development division to undertake this critical work. This position will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and reporting of the multi-year initiative in alignment with broader economic and community development goals. This encompasses integrating the seven initial action items into a cohesive framework, fostering collaboration among city departments and stakeholders, and ensuring progress through timely monitoring and reporting. Key responsibilities include coordinating all action strategies, leading economic development deliverables, pursuing funding opportunities, managing resource allocation and budget, monitoring performance, and serving as a central point of contact for stakeholders. Additionally, the role involves facilitating collaboration and trust-building among stakeholders to achieve a sustainable revitalization of the downtown area.

Based upon current salary schedules, the estimated annual cost for a Project Lead is \$128,483 inclusive of fringe benefits. In addition to salary costs, a further \$1,500 would be required for required office and computer expenses. The 2024 operating impact in support of this objective is \$87,155.

Collaboration and ongoing active engagement and coordination with a variety of external partners will be critical to achieve the goals of the revitalization strategy. As this work progresses, future reports regarding progress, resource and funding requirements, and additional enhancements will be brought to City Council for consideration.

### **Partners for Progress**

Below is a list of an initial group of partners who will be engaged to successfully execute the Strengthen the Core Downtown Revitalization Plan. This list will continue to expand over time as additional stakeholders are brought on board or as further developments are made:

- St. Clair College
- University of Windsor
- Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Area
- WIFF – Windsor International Film Festival
- Invest Windsor Essex – Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre
- The Downtown Mission
- Welcome Centre Shelter for Women & Families
- Salvation Army Windsor – Centre of Hope
- Healthcare Partners and Providers
- Family Services Windsor Essex
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Other stakeholders, to be determined.

As part of Action Item 7 - Stronger Together, a table will be convened to foster ongoing collaboration among stakeholders and provide a platform for meaningful discussions.

### **Risk Analysis:**

There is a significant reputational risk in maintaining the status quo with respect to managing perceptions of safety within the downtown core.

As shown through the comments received in Strategy Corp's community consultation, there are major concerns related to perceived safety within the downtown core. Failure to adopt the proposed Downtown Revitalization Plan could ultimately result in a further decline of the number of visitors or businesses downtown. Expansion of Windsor Police Services within the downtown core and expansion of Auxiliary Police as outlined in this report will help in achieving the action of Safe Streets.

There is also a significant resource risk related to the pressures on Windsor Police in responding to non-policing and healthcare related issues.

Without increased funding for mental health, addictions, and homelessness programs, such as the H4 expansion, Windsor-Essex will continue to see increasing needs and experience pressure on human, health, and emergency services. Emergency services continue to be a costly response that has limited impact on the root of the underlying conditions contributing to mental health, addictions, and homelessness. Services to

proactively reduce and stabilize crisis minimizes costs and traumatic outcomes for people cycling through emergency supports.

As part of the immediate action strategy, some of the actions will need to be reviewed in more detail to take appropriate risk mitigation strategies. For example, use of surveillance cameras as a crime prevention measure will need to be carefully examined to ensure compliance with privacy laws. Moreover, the effectiveness of surveillance systems in reducing crime must be balanced against the costs and risks associated with their implementation. Expansion and funding of Project SafeStreets will also require consideration of privacy and procurement laws. Therefore, a thorough evaluation of the legal implications is essential as this action item is rolled out. As other action strategies are brought forward, further analysis will take place to ensure compliance with law and risk mitigation.

## **Climate Change Risks**

### **Climate Change Mitigation:**

No critical or significant risks are identified with the recommendations of this report.

Attracting new residents and business to the downtown core while increasing a sense of safety, can also reduce community greenhouse gas emissions, as residents living closer to places of employment, essential services, entertainment, and recreational amenities have the ability to participate in active transportation opportunities more easily.

### **Climate Change Adaptation:**

No critical or significant risks are identified with the recommendations of this report.

Downtown cores, including Windsor, are impacted by the urban heat island effect. Extreme heat can negatively impact the comfort of a space, reducing the length of time a visitor will spend in a location. Extreme heat can also exacerbate physical and mental health conditions.

Creating a Vibrant District through improved streetscaping should consider opportunities to improve the tree canopy and/or artificial shade. A review of the CIP may also present opportunities to mitigate the impacts of increasing temperatures and extreme heat through façade and building improvements.

## **Financial Matters:**

As outlined in the Discussion section, the proposed Downtown Revitalization Plan includes an immediate action strategy. Three of the outlined items currently require additional operating funds; policing within the downtown core, auxiliary police at City parks and trails, and H4 hours. On February 10, 2024, the 2024 Operating and 10-year Capital plan was approved which included an amount of \$1,000,000 for downtown capital improvements. Should City Council support the proposed strategy additional operation funding would be required. The annualized amounts which are required have been prorated based upon an early May implementation date.

**Operating expenditures – Total Additional 2024 funding - \$3,239,878**

- 1) Expansion of Windsor Police Services (WPS) presence in the downtown - \$1,384,000. Expenditures include salaries and related fringes for additional staff resources dedicated to enhanced patrols.
- 2) Extended hours for the Homelessness & Housing Help Hub (H4) - \$1,470,340. Expenditures cover an additional six (6) hours (i.e. from 6pm to midnight) inclusive of staffing equivalencies (28.7 FTE), office and program supplies.
- 3) Additional funding for auxiliary officers in parks - \$217,000. Expenditures include salary and fringes of additional patrol officers as well as additional funding for uniforms and equipment.
- 4) Additional funding for a dedicated by-law officer - \$64,413 inclusive of fringe benefits. In addition to salary costs, a further \$16,970 would be required for required vehicle, uniform, personal protection, and communication equipment. The 2024 operating impact in support of this objective is \$81,383.
- 5) Additional funding for Economic Development Project Lead - \$85,655 inclusive of fringe benefits. In addition to salary costs, a further \$1,500 would be required for required office and computer expenses.

The above noted expenditures were not included in the 2024 Approved Operating budget. Should Council endorse the strategy as outlined in this report, inclusive of the noted actions which would be required immediately to start the process, the funding of these costs would necessitate an increase to the overall tax levy of approximately 0.70%.

Once approved, these expenditures will be considered part of the 2024 Base Operating budget and will be annualized to reflect a full year estimated cost for purposes of the 2025 Operating development process.

**Capital Expenditures - \$1,000,000**

Various capital expenditures such as lighting, additional surveillance, relocation of benches, etc., will be required as part of this plan. An amount of \$1 million was previously approved as part of the 2024 Capital Budget with funding made available in 2024 (\$200,000) and 2025 (\$800,000). This amount will be utilized to initiate improvements that will address this objective. Administration will undertake to refine the cost estimates for the noted capital improvements and allocate the placeholder funding to maximize value within the existing funding available.

It is acknowledged that there will be an element of ongoing operating and maintenance required for the noted improvements. At this time, an amount cannot be estimated as this will depend upon the nature and the anticipated life cycle of the capital expenditure. At this time, it is not anticipated that significant additional funding will be required in

2025 however Administration will ensure that any operating or maintenance expenditures are brought forward in future budget submissions for consideration.

In addition, \$150,000 has been approved as part of the 2024 10- year capital plan to fund the costs associated with the CIP review. No further funding is expected to be required to complete this review.

The above noted costs relate to the immediate action items. Further expenditures may be required as the impacts of the initial plan are reviewed and further stages to the plan are considered. Administration will report back to City Council with further details as required and will bring forward any additional financial commitments as may be deemed necessary to fully implement the strategy.

### **Consultations:**

Office of the Mayor, City of Windsor  
James Chacko, Executive Director of Parks  
Doran Anzolin, Executive Initiatives Coordinator, Human and Health Services  
Kelly Goz, Manager (A), Homelessness & Housing Support  
Whitney Kitchen, Coordinator, Housing Administration and Development  
Stephen Lynn, Manager Social Policy & Planning  
Neil Robertson, Deputy City Planner, Growth  
Michelle Staadegaard, Manager of Culture & Events  
Jen Knights, Executive Director of Recreation and Culture  
Karina Richters, Supervisor of Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change  
Matt Johnson, Executive Director of Economic Development  
Shawna Boakes, Executive Director of Operations, Deputy City Engineer  
Stacey McGuire, Executive Director Engineering, Deputy City Engineer  
Craig Robertson, Manager of Licensing and Enforcement  
John Revell, Chief Building Official  
Rob Vani, Deputy Chief Building Official/Inspections  
Sandra Bradt, Executive Initiatives Coordinator, Economic Development  
Windsor Police Services  
All organizations and stakeholders listed in StrategyCorp's "Key Findings and Recommendations Report".

### **Conclusion:**

The City of Windsor engaged StrategyCorp consultants to provide support with the development of a Downtown Revitalization Plan. StrategyCorp facilitated intentional, meaningful, and visible consultation with a variety of stakeholders and community members to determine how to solve high priority issues in the downtown core. Several action items emerged from the findings of Strategy Corp which include key opportunities to improve downtown Windsor.

These initial action items and themes (1) Safe Streets, (2) High Standards, (3) Healthy Spaces, (4) Place-Making, (5) Vibrant District, (6) 'Our Downtown', and (7) Stronger Together.

An immediate action strategy is proposed which includes expanding the hours of H4, expansion of Windsor Police Services within downtown, a dedicated Building By-Law

Enforcement Officer for Ward 3, and increasing the number of auxiliary police at city parks and trails. Furthermore, the addition of a Project Lead in the Economic Development Department is proposed to help with the significant coordination and forward execution of the objectives outlined for the downtown core.

It is recommended that the Downtown Revitalization Plan be endorsed by Council and the immediate action strategy be approved to begin revitalizing the downtown core, which will ultimately provide great benefits to the entire City of Windsor.

**Planning Act Matters:**

N/A

**Approvals:**

Name	Title
Rania Toufeili	Executive Initiatives Coordinator
Mark Winterton	Commissioner, Infrastructure Services (A)
Dana Paladino	Commissioner, Corporate Services (A)
Ray Mensour	Commissioner, Community Services
Andrew Daher	Commissioner, Human and Health Services
Jelena Payne	Commissioner, Economic Development
Janice Guthrie	Commissioner, Finance & City Treasurer
Joe Mancina	Chief Administrative Officer

**Notifications:**

Name	Address	Email
Windsor Regional Hospital		
Canadian Mental Health Association		
Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital		
Windsor Police Services		
Downtown Windsor BIA		
Windsor Essex County Health Unit		

**Appendices:**

1 StrategyCorp – Downtown Revitalization Plan – Key Findings and Recommendations Report



# City of Windsor

## Downtown Revitalization Plan – Key Findings and Recommendations Report

January 2024



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# Project Introduction & Background

# Project Context

The proactive and innovative approaches Windsor takes to community safety and well-being – that are resulting in reductions of crime severity, violent crime severity and non-violent crime severity in the region – are being challenged by a growing perception that Windsor’s downtown is unsafe. In addition, the City and the Windsor Police Service are experiencing challenges such as:



**Underutilized services / resources:** Despite available shelter space, a significant amount of unhoused people prefer to not use shelters. Individuals living in community housing often prefer socializing away from such housing.



**Increased visibility of mental health challenges and substance use:** Evidence of substance use (e.g., public intoxication, used needles) are increasing residents’ concerns of crime and negatively impacting their feelings of safety and security.



**Constrained service access:** Individuals in need often cannot be connected with appropriate services when they need them, leading to an over-reliance on emergency services.







**Uneven business confidence:** While a growing number of new businesses are opening in Windsor’s downtown, other businesses and / or investors are closing their businesses or examining the feasibility of continued operations in Windsor’s downtown core.

In response to these and other concerns, Windsor initiated the development of a solutions-oriented plan to improve Windsor’s downtown image, help businesses, customers, and residents feel confident of their safety, and connect individuals to appropriate supports where and when they need them.

Source(s): [CBC News – Windsor](#).

# Project Objectives

The City engaged StrategyCorp to support them with the development of its Downtown Revitalization Plan. The following objectives were pursued throughout the project:

-  **Facilitate intentional, meaningful, and visible consultation:** Engage broadly with diverse stakeholders and community members – including individuals with lived and living experience – to further understand their needs.
-  **Leverage others' experiences:** Explore solutions implemented in comparable municipalities and / or other organizations experiencing similar challenges.
-  **Determine how to “move the needle” and solve high priority issues:** Identify additional initiatives and resources to help business owners, customers, and residents feel confident of their safety in Windsor’s downtown and connect individuals in need with supports where and when they need them (e.g., through adapted service delivery).
-  **Lay a strong foundation for continued “small victories”:** Develop a multi-dimensional plan to enhance livability and optimism within downtown Windsor that responds to the continuously evolving nature of Windsor’s downtown safety landscape.

# Project Approach

To support the development of a “Made in Windsor” Downtown Revitalization Plan, the below approach was taken:

	Phase 1: Project Kick-Off	Phase 2: Consultation & Communications Planning	Phase 3: Consultation & Environmental Scan	Phase 4: Implementation Planning
<b>Duration</b>	1 Week	7 Weeks	6 Weeks	3 Weeks
<b>Objectives</b>	Formally kick off the project and lay the groundwork for project success	Develop a Consultation Plan and a Communications Plan to support consultation	Evaluate what’s working well and what could be improved with respect to community safety and well-being in the City	Develop recommendations to further advance the City’s community safety and well-being initiatives over the short-to-long term
<b>Primary Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host Project Kick-Off</li> <li>Develop Project Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Relevant Data and Documentation</li> <li>Design Consultation Plan</li> <li>Develop Communications Plan</li> <li>Plan for Consultation (e.g., Schedule Consultation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct Environmental Scan</li> <li>Present to Downtown Safety Table</li> <li>Lead 10-12 interviews</li> <li>Facilitate Focus Groups</li> <li>Launch Community Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Document</li> <li>Present Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Document</li> <li>Refine and submit Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Document</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Kick-Off Meeting Agenda and Materials</li> <li>✓ Project Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Consultation Plan</li> <li>✓ Communications Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Environmental Scan</li> <li>✓ Interview Guide</li> <li>✓ Focus Group Discussion Guide</li> <li>✓ Online Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Draft Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Document</li> <li>✓ Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Presentation</li> <li>✓ Final Key Findings &amp; Recommendations Document</li> </ul>

# Needs Assessment Overview

# Consultation Summary

It was critical to the City that a broad range of downtown stakeholders and community members were engaged regarding their needs. A summary of consultation activities is included below.\*



## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

18, 30-45-minute interviews with representatives from different sectors and disciplines.



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

A virtual survey with over 3,500 individual respondents.\*\*



## FOCUS GROUPS

2, 1.5-2-hour focus groups with residents, business representatives, and social service providers.



## WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

30+ organizations or individuals contacted to provide written feedback.

Relevant insights and learnings from the City's Pathway to Potential strategy enhancement project – on which StrategyCorp is supporting the City – were also incorporated. Specifically, applicable themes from focus groups with unhoused individuals, individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges, and individuals living in community housing buildings.

\*Additional details regarding organizations consulted are included in Appendix B.

\*\*Additional details regarding the Community Survey are included in Appendix C.

# Needs Assessment Framework

In recognition of the multidimensional and often subjective nature of downtown vibrancy and perceived safety, stakeholder and community needs were assessed through a 5-layer framework:



## Perception of Safety

The extent to which stakeholders and community members feel protected from danger, risk, and injury.



## Governance & Community Partnerships

The extent to which stakeholders and community members perceive the oversight of downtown vibrancy and community-safety and well-being-related strategies, initiatives, plans, and partnerships as effective.



## Service Delivery

The extent to which available downtown vibrancy and community safety and well-being-related services address stakeholder and community needs.



## Downtown Appearance & Vibrancy

The physical appearance of Windsor's downtown core and the extent to which it is seen as an exciting and energetic place where people want to spend time.



## Community Facilities & Infrastructure

The extent to which Windsor has accessible places, buildings, or equipment people want to use.



# Key Findings Summary

# Key Findings | Opportunity Area Summary

Based on stakeholder and community needs, three key opportunity areas emerged:

Opportunity Area	 <p><b>Help People Feel Safe &amp; Want to Visit Downtown</b></p>	 <p><b>Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises and Those Experiencing Homelessness</b></p>	 <p><b>Better Support Windsor's Service Delivery Partners</b></p>
Related Goal	<p>Increase individuals' confidence of their safety through visible safety-related initiatives and attract more people to downtown through a mix of events, amenities, and an inviting streetscape.</p>	<p>Connect individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges with the right supports, in the right place, at the right time. Provide unhoused individuals with accessible and integrated supports that reflect their unique needs and preferences.</p>	<p>Collaborate with service delivery partners and help them develop trusted relationships with clients and deliver the best services as possible.</p>
Lead	<p><b>Windsor</b></p>	<p><b>Ontario</b> (Significant provincial investment required to address lack of services)</p>	<p><b>Windsor</b></p>

# What We Heard | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (1/2)

Eight key findings were identified related to helping individuals feel safer in – and want to visit – Windsor’s downtown core:

What We Heard	Related Opportunities
<p><b>Incidents of property damage, petty crime, and social disorder are frustrating businesses and making many community members feel unsafe</b></p>	<p>1. Explore new initiatives and / or tools to address crime and reduce the need for enforcement-led incident response.</p>
<p><b>There is often limited foot traffic downtown due to minimal and / or inconsistent attractions, events, and facilities</b></p>	<p>2. Better entice visitors to downtown Windsor through a mix of attractions and regular events and programming.</p>
<p><b>While there is a strong appetite for local street activation and placemaking initiatives, barriers to implementing such initiatives exist</b></p>	<p>3. Reduce barriers to local street activation and placemaking initiatives.</p>
<p><b>The prevalence of vacant residences, buildings, and land can create a perception of decline and lack of investment in Windsor’s downtown core</b></p>	<p>4. Encourage the re-purposing of vacant residences, buildings, and land where possible and the better upkeep of vacant residences, buildings, and land.</p>
<p><b>While residents and visitors generally appreciate existing downtown beautification efforts, many believe continued improvements are needed to create more inviting streets</b></p>	<p>5. Continue updating community infrastructure in response to community needs.</p>

## What We Heard | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (2/2)

What We Heard	Related Opportunities
<p><b>Negative media attention is a significant contributor to the perception that Windsor’s downtown is unsafe</b></p>	<p>6. Continue promoting Windsor’s downtown core and increase the dissemination of positive news stories.</p>
<p><b>Some residents lack knowledge of unhoused people or individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis</b></p>	<p>7. Educate residents and businesses downtown regarding homelessness and mental health and / or addictions challenges to address myths and decrease stigma. Empower community members through easy-to-understand information and easy-to-navigate resources.</p>
<p><b>There is a need to increase the number of residents and businesses living downtown along with adding new amenities and housing</b></p>	<p>8. Over time, expand housing options within Windsor’s downtown core to drive greater population density.</p>

## What We Heard | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises

Three key findings were identified with respect to better supporting individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis in Windsor’s downtown core:

What We Heard	Related Opportunities
<p><b>Individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis are often not receiving the right supports, in the right place, at the right time</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expanded hours for an accessible facility or facilities where individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis can receive appropriate support.</li> <li>• Secure sustainable funding to expand programs – or make pilot programs permanent – that are creating positive outcomes for individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions crises in downtown Windsor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration between mental health and addictions service providers is generally seen as inadequate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance trust between social service providers and strengthen focus on collaborative, rather than competing interests.</li> </ul>
<p><b>There is a lack of supportive housing available</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate options to increase housing options for individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges.</li> </ul>

## What We Heard | Better Support Unhoused People

One primary finding emerged with respect to better supporting unhoused people in Windsor’s downtown core:

What We Heard	Related Opportunities
<b>Indoor facilities for unhoused people are limited in Windsor’s downtown core</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure drop-in facilities are available and accessible for unhoused individuals in Windsor at different points throughout the day, evening, and overnight.</li></ul>

# What We Heard | Better Support Windsor’s Service Delivery Partners

Four main findings were identified with respect to better supporting the City’s service delivery partners and program implementation:

What We Heard	Related Opportunities
<p><b>Social service providers can experience significant funding challenges due to City funding processes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the extent to which social service provider funding can be streamlined.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Many social service providers are skeptical of engaging with the City</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination with social service providers through robust engagement approaches and continuous, transparent communication.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lack of coordination reduces impact of city and community initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities to increase information sharing and coordination regarding community safety and well-being in Windsor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions exist regarding how successful Windsor has been in implementing plans and strategies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the extent to which community-safety related plans and strategies are achieving their intended aims and identify opportunities to maximize impact.</li> </ul>

# Recommendations



# Recommendations | Overview

Overall, seven high-level recommendations were identified, with supporting sub-recommendations:

Opportunity Area / Enabler	Related Goal	High-Level Recommendation
<p><b>Help People Feel Safe &amp; Want to Visit Downtown</b></p>	<p>Increase individuals' confidence of their safety through visible safety-related initiatives and attract more people to downtown through a mix of events, amenities, and an inviting streetscape.</p>	1. Create and enforce a Zero-Tolerance Strategy.
		2. Create vibrancy by attracting and engaging residents and tourists.
		3. Encourage people and businesses to move downtown.
		4. Increase enforcement of property standards and fill vacant buildings.
		5. Enhance community engagement and implement a marketing strategy.
<p><b>Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises and Better Support Unhoused People</b></p>	<p>Connect individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges with the right supports, in the right place, at the right time.</p>	<p>6. Advance a Health and Community Safety Strategy.</p>
	<p>Identify solutions for unhoused individuals with accessible and integrated supports that reflect their unique needs and preferences.</p>	
<p><b>Better Support Windsor's Service Delivery Partners</b></p>	<p>Collaborate with service delivery partners and help them feel well supported so they can develop trusted relationships with clients and deliver the best services as possible. Strengthen coordination between the City and its community safety and well-being partners.</p>	<p>7. Establish formal channels to drive greater alignment, collaboration, and trust amongst community safety and well-being stakeholders.</p>

# Create and Enforce a Zero-Tolerance Strategy (1/2)

Three supporting recommendations were identified related to creating and enforcing a zero-tolerance strategy\*:

## Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

### Supporting Recommendations

**1. Implement a new police community safety strategy:** Launch a new “tailored to Windsor” police response model focused on sustained high visibility and collaborative cross-sectoral response. Police could consider all approaches to promote lawful behaviour and intervene in open drug use, property damage, petty crime, and social disorder in the downtown core. Strategy could also synchronize response activities across the various social services and law enforcement teams operating in Windsor’s downtown.

- Expand the Windsor Police Service City Centre Patrol Team. Continue to operate inside their designated geographic area but operate under their own designated command to allow for enhanced focus to improve resource allotment in the downtown.
- The City Centre Patrol team could also work with the Neighbourhood Officer Program, the Problem Oriented Policing unit, the Community Services Unit, the City of Windsor’s Bylaw Officers/311, and other relevant entities (e.g. AGCO, Windsor Fire and Rescue) to address crime, disorder, and quality of life issues. Consider adding additional officers or other resources that support engagement and education.
- The Nurse Police Teams, Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Teams, and the Patrol Outreach Team could all be expanded and placed under the purview of the City Centre Patrol to synchronize daily and strategic responses to the downtown health and human services community.
- Assign a crime analyst to the City Centre Patrol to ensure information is appropriately collected and used to drive both daily and strategic planning decisions, assist in directing resources, overseeing stakeholder communications, and ensuring regular community meetings are facilitated.
- Explore non-emergency 311 services.
- Consider a community liaison officer at a supervisory level
- Improve use of data to align services with community needs. For example, prime shopping and entertainment times, evening establishment closing times, and larger events.

\*Zero-tolerance policing does not mean increased prosecutions. It is about intentionally and consistently disrupting negative behaviours to try and dilute them and create sustainable behavioural change.

## Create and Enforce a Zero-Tolerance Strategy (2/2)

### Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

#### Supporting Recommendations

2. **Improve monitoring of safety hotspots:** Support the concept of a “Project Greenlight” security camera initiative in the downtown core. Purchase a mobile lighting and camera unit. Encourage greater collaboration between private businesses and police and / or the creation of a framework agreement to facilitate collaboration between private security and police.
3. **Improve awareness of existing support services:** Use 311 to improve the way residents are helped in accessing services. Continue providing plain language information and accessible resources to help community members understand available supports for unhoused individuals and individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis.
4. **Redirect people to safer places:** relocate city benches away from vacant storefronts and buildings and discourage standing on medians in the downtown core.

# Create Vibrancy by Attracting and Engaging Residents and Tourists

Three supporting recommendations were identified related to creating vibrancy by attracting and engaging residents and tourists:

## Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

### Supporting Recommendations

1. **Expand existing activities that draw residents downtown:** Pursue new events. Actively explore opportunities to make popular events more frequent or extend existing popular events (e.g., the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market) year-round. Determine how existing event venues could be enhanced / improved to attract a diverse range of events and maximize event attendance. Continue adding decorative lighting and making other streetscaping improvements. Review city event venues to identify opportunities for enhancement.
2. **Remove barriers to make it easier to organize events that draw people downtown:** Simplify the event approval process and reduce permit fees for events. Create new incentives for large-scale events downtown (e.g., events that attract more than 1,000 people) and encourage the dissemination of event planning leading practices to encourage post-event spillover into downtown businesses. Engage business representatives (e.g., the Downtown Windsor BIA) and business owners regarding potential partnership opportunities for new events and how to make downtown more welcoming for individuals, families, and businesses.
3. **Convert vacancies and support the use of other flexible spaces to activate street front animation:** Explore the creation of short-term City-funded incentives to stimulate activation of currently vacant commercial spaces and flexible street spaces in the downtown core.

# Encourage People and Businesses to Move Downtown

Two recommendations were identified related to encouraging people and businesses to move downtown:

## Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

### Supporting Recommendations

- 1. Provide more housing options downtown:** Explore longer-term changes to increase housing options and population density in Windsor's downtown core (e.g., provide incentives for developers to convert existing buildings into residential units).
- 2. Support the attraction of new businesses and anchor tenants downtown:** To create a more complete community with a walkable downtown - and instill a sense of safety - encourage the Downtown Windsor BIA to actively pursue key downtown businesses and anchor tenants, such as grocery stores and restaurants. The city could establish an aggressive, short-term Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The city could also identify financial or policy incentives to encourage developers to build downtown.

# Increase Enforcement of Property Standards and Fill Vacant Buildings

Three recommendations were identified related to increasing the enforcement of property standards and filling vacant buildings:

## Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

### Supporting Recommendations

1. **Increase enforcement of property standards:** Engage relevant City teams (e.g., the City’s Building Inspection Unit) to create or modify by-laws to better encourage the sufficient maintenance of vacant residences, buildings, and land (e.g., Property Standards By-law, Waste Materials By-law, Standing Water By-law, etc.). Evaluate whether an increase in financial penalties is needed for unkept properties.
2. **Facilitate downtown property improvement:** Improve the Downtown Windsor Enhancement Strategy and Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to better encourage the maintenance and updating of vacant residences and buildings (e.g., facade improvements, space conversion, etc.). Provide additional financial incentives to existing and prospective downtown business owners / operators to update properties over the short-term (e.g., within 18 months). Enhance City-owned properties located in the downtown core (e.g., paint parking garages), increase the amount of garbage receptacles, and improve the frequency of garbage collection.
3. **Reduce complexity/approval time for City grant applications:** Explore whether grant funding can be provided to recipients faster.

# Enhance Community Engagement and Implement a Marketing Strategy

Three recommendations were identified related to enhancing community engagement and implementing a marketing strategy:

## Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown

### Supporting Recommendations

1. **Build on existing community engagement:** Regularly engage downtown stakeholders and community members regarding their needs and desired improvements to make the downtown streetscape feel more welcoming and safer (e.g., through enhanced street lighting and / or decorative lighting). Use stakeholder and community feedback to inform the updating of City infrastructure.
2. **Promote the downtown and its successes as they happen:** Encourage the City’s Communications and Customer Service Department – and City stakeholders – to continue connecting with local media outlets to promote positive news stories about Windsor’s downtown core.
3. **Emphasize the real story on downtown safety:** Continue emphasizing – and supporting partners in reinforcing – the relative safety of Windsor’s downtown core in communications (e.g., the Windsor Police Service). Work collaboratively with the Downtown Windsor BIA, Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, and others to create a marketing strategy to share downtown successes and foster a sense of safety.

# Advance a Health and Community Safety Strategy (1/2)

Six recommendations were identified related to advancing a Health and Safety Strategy:

## Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises; Better Support for Unhoused People

### Supporting Recommendations

1. **Expand advocacy efforts:** Advocate to the federal and provincial governments for the funding required to implement the below mentioned social service initiatives based on each government’s area of responsibility and priorities, recognizing that municipal governments do not have the fiscal capacity to solve these challenges alone.
2. **Expand mental health and / or addictions care options:** Facilitate the creation of a low barrier, transitional care facility where individuals experiencing an immediate mental health and / or addictions crisis can be provided with care tailored to their needs. For example, bring together local health leaders (e.g., Ontario Health, the Windsor-Essex Ontario Health Team, and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare) to determine the best approach to secure provincial funding for the creation of such a facility.
3. **Support long-term sustainability of existing programs:** Advocate in support of long-term provincial funding for Windsor Police Service and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare so their M.C.R.R.T and WPS C.O.A.S.T programs can be extended from 5 days a week to 7 days a week. Advocate in support of long-term provincial funding for the Windsor Police Service and Windsor Regional Hospital so their Nurse and Police Team (NPT) pilot program can become permanent and extend its hours of operation.
4. **Enhance Homelessness and Housing Help Hub (H4) accessibility:** Extend H4 hours to ensure unhoused people have a facility they can access prior to the opening of overnight shelters. Evaluate whether barriers exist to accessing H4 in its interim state (e.g., the extent to which unhoused individuals can “drop-in” to use the facility); if barriers exist, determine how to minimize such barriers.

Source(s): [Windsor Police Service – Public News Update](#).



## Advance a Health and Community Safety Strategy (2/2)

### Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises; Better Support for Unhoused People

#### Supporting Recommendations

- 5. Provide more supportive housing as funding becomes available :** Continue implementing strategies in the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan, specifically strategies related to Goal 2: Sustain and Expand Housing that is Linked with Supports:
- Expand Housing First programs;
  - Expand services and supports for people who experience chronic, episodic or high acuity homelessness and who have been identified as having complex needs;
  - Review, research, assess and implement a continuum of housing options that will address varying levels of need for support that is people-centred and aligns with best practices; and
  - Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources and collaborative opportunities for supportive housing options based on best practices.

Source(s): [Windsor Police Service – Public News Update](#).

## Establish Formal Channels to Deliver Greater Alignment and Collaboration between Stakeholders

One recommendation was identified related to establishing formal channels to drive greater alignment, collaboration, and trust amongst community safety and well-being stakeholders:

### Better Support Windsor's Service Delivery Partners

#### Supporting Recommendation

- 1. Convene a table** designed to improve collaboration, trust-building, and open communication (e.g., regarding participants' strengths and weaknesses and how shared resources can be leveraged for greatest impact) between mental health and addictions service provider leadership. The table would:
  - Identify opportunities to improve city processes and reduce red tape to allow delivery partners to operate effectively.
  - Better connect and engage mental health and / or addictions service providers:
  - Identify opportunities to enhance information sharing, better set and evaluate goals, and strengthen coordination between city staff, its partners, and regional leadership via the city's community safety and well-being infrastructure.
  - Create public and transparent goals and a process for ongoing evaluation.
  - Expand programs to meet client needs.

# Conclusion

## Conclusion | Looking Ahead

**Like other municipalities across the country, Windsor’s downtown safety landscape will continue to change. This report is intended to act as a guide for continued – and strengthened – action to support all stakeholders and community members within Windsor’s downtown core. The recommendations in this report will help provide the environment to encourage businesses and residents to come downtown.**

To effectively implement recommendations within this report, it will be critical for Windsor to engage and partner with others, such as social service providers, business owners, healthcare institutions, and local law enforcement. In doing so, it will be important for the City to continuously reflect on the following:

- **Governance & Collective Impact Infrastructure:** Many committees, agencies, and groups exist in Windsor who support community members and have a thorough understanding of their needs. Opportunities to assess differentiated activities, identify synergies, learn from one another, and drive greater coordination and continuous improvement should be explored regularly.
- **Building Trust with Stakeholders and Community Members:** While most stakeholders and community members are cautiously optimistic about the City’s Downtown Revitalization Plan, many remain skeptical that the Plan will lead to real change. The City should see the development of the Plan as a starting point for further engagement with stakeholders and community members. Care should be given to demonstrating to individuals that they have been heard. In addition, if City Council approves to proceed with specific recommendations, a robust implementation roadmap should be established – including clear accountabilities – to support Plan goals in becoming a reality.
- **The Levers Within the City’s Control:** While the City will need to rely on other levels of government and public, private, and not-for-profit partners to implement some recommendations, others require the City to rethink how to optimize existing resources at its disposal and how different approaches could be taken to maximize community impact.
- **Building Partnerships with Other Governments:** The provincial and federal governments have larger revenue bases and responsibility for funding the social services that are not keeping up with the pace of change. Making the case for new funding opportunities to reduce homelessness and improve mental health supports would help improve Windsor’s ability to provide adequate services in the downtown.

# Appendix A: Key Improvement Areas – Additional Details

## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (1/6)

The following is a synthesis of what we heard with respect to helping people feel safer downtown and encouraging people to visit downtown:

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Incidents of property damage, petty crime, and social disorder are frustrating businesses and making many community members feel unsafe</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders in Windsor’s business community highlighted substantial challenges associated with crime downtown (e.g., thefts, broken windows, break-in attempts). Property damage and petty crime often imposes significant costs on small and medium-sized businesses (e.g., building repair) and can create significant reputational impacts to businesses.</li> <li>Some businesses are proactively investing their own money in new technologies and programs like Project Greenlight given the frequency of property-related crimes in the downtown core.</li> <li>A few stakeholders noted that most incidents of property damage and petty crime in Windsor’s downtown are committed by the same group of about 10 or so individuals who are well known to residents and law enforcement.</li> <li>Some stakeholders reported that property damage is more common at night as less people are generally around.</li> <li>The concentration of shelters and other service providers along Ouellette Avenue is creating issues around property damage and garbage with many nearby residents and businesses.</li> <li>Some stakeholders and community members mentioned that they are confused why the Windsor Police Service does not more strictly enforce illegal activity, specifically the open use of illegal substances. Some stakeholders and community members think the Windsor Police Service is tolerating behaviour instead of strictly enforcing the rule of law. These individuals believe that there is a significant opportunity for greater enforcement, and that doing so would create a fairer environment that respects those who are invested in and committed to downtown (e.g., business owners).</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (2/6)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Incidents of property damage, petty crime, and social disorder are frustrating businesses and making many community members feel unsafe (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the same time, many stakeholders noted that the Windsor Police Service has limited capacity. For example, Windsor Police Service officers often need to wait with individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis at Windsor Regional Hospital until they are admitted. This is generally due to the limited alternatives available in Windsor for individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis.</li> <li>• In addition, if Windsor Police Service officers arrest an individual for open drug use, they are generally released a short while later, as the Crown will not prosecute these individuals. As such, repeat offending amongst some individuals is common.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders believe that an investment by the City in expanding the DWBIA’s security camera program could help deter, and better respond to, incidents of property damage and petty crime in the downtown core.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, stakeholders mentioned that the City could provide funding and / or help expediate the process for new business owners who wish to join the program.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some stakeholders noted that a dedicated downtown police or special constable presence could help to deter crime in the downtown core while also increasing residents’ and business owners’ sense of safety.</li> <li>• Others suggested that a 3:30am curfew or better addressing the 2:00am – 3:30am traffic surge post-bar closure could be helpful in decreasing social disorder and incidents of property damage and petty crime.</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (3/6)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>There is often limited foot traffic downtown due to minimal and / or inconsistent attractions, events, and facilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many businesses in the downtown core did not reopen after the pandemic, leaving parts of the downtown with high vacancy rates and little foot traffic.</li> <li>• One stakeholder remarked that not having other people nearby is what makes people second guess their safety. This is particularly true during the early morning hours and evenings where foot traffic is almost non-existent in some areas.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders noted that the downtown core feels deserted in the evenings after offices and government buildings close, contributing to a sense of unease.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders noted feeling more isolated and less safe during the day, as Windsor’s downtown core is often busier at night with lively restaurants and bars.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders noted that other cities have launched successful downtown ambassador programs that could be replicated in Windsor; these programs could provide a visible presence on the streets while helping to identify safety problems and connect residents, businesses, service providers, and City Hall.</li> <li>• We heard that generally, residents in Windsor and the surrounding region do not view Windsor’s downtown core as a place to visit. Other City neighbourhoods such as Walkerville have become trendier and are attracting a greater share of visitors.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ However, stakeholders and community members did highlight a few successful initiatives such as the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market and the Windsor International Film Festival. These events draw people into the downtown core and help to create a more lively and safer feeling downtown.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There is a perception that Windsor has not done a good job historically at retaining anchor institutions in the downtown core (e.g., new arena). Other cities – like Detroit – are seen as doing a better job of keeping people downtown.</li> </ul>



## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (4/6)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>While there is a strong appetite for local street activation and placemaking initiatives, barriers to implementing such initiatives exist</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few stakeholders noted that City by-laws related to street activations are out of date and need to be revised. For example, several stakeholders referenced that food trucks are not allowed downtown, despite demand.</li> <li>There is a perception amongst some stakeholders that the City is not as supportive of street activations in the downtown core by community groups as it could be due to factors such as high permit costs, administrative hoops, and processing delays.</li> <li>Some stakeholders believe that the City should do more to promote the arts, culture, and tourism in the downtown core to help diversify the local economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The prevalence of vacant residences, buildings, and land can create a perception of decline and lack of investment in Windsor’s downtown core</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many stakeholders and community members noted the prevalence of boarded up or vacant buildings and land in the downtown core and the negative impact this can have on residents, visitors, and potential investors.</li> <li>Stakeholders hope that the City will more actively address abandoned downtown properties and land. For example, by examining existing policies related to properties that have fallen into disrepair to see if they could be more punitive in nature. There is a perception that issues with vacant residences and commercial buildings have been amplified by out-of-town landlords.</li> <li>Some stakeholders in the business community noted that, while the City’s existing Community Improvement Plan is appreciated, making improvements to properties can be an onerous process – especially for small businesses – and can take well over a year from start to finish.</li> <li>Other stakeholders noted that city-led incentives for developing additional housing in the downtown core should be explored. For example, ideas were shared regarding city-provided funding to create additional residential units for downtown property owners. Increased support for a community land trust model was floated, as was the purchasing of vacant buildings for rapid housing.</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (5/6)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>While residents and visitors generally appreciate existing downtown beautification efforts, many believe continued improvements are needed to create more inviting streets</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We heard that the City has started to improve the look and feel of the downtown core (e.g., flower gardens, public art installations, used needle clean up).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ However, stakeholders noted that continued City investment is required to improve the aesthetics of Windsor's downtown core and attract more residents to visit.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Areas of the downtown core that have experienced positive change in the past several years are those which have active businesses/patios, an abundance of foot traffic, well-lit sidewalks, etc.</li> <li>• Over the longer-term, stakeholders and community members suggest that the City increase its focus on creating a walkable downtown where residents can work, live, and play. This includes better pedestrian access and connections between downtown amenities and the riverfront, the intensification of existing sites, and a greater mix of housing options in the core.</li> <li>• Stakeholders noted that many parts of the downtown core lack sufficient lighting, particularly around parking lots and alleyways, which can create a sense of unease.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Negative media attention is a significant contributor to the perception that Windsor's downtown is unsafe</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics show that downtown Windsor is safe and that levels of crime are generally not increasing; however, there is a widely held perception within Windsor and the surrounding region that the downtown core is not safe. Many stakeholders mentioned that the community needs to hear that Windsor's downtown is indeed safe.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders noted that part of this perception is fueled by local media coverage in addition to visible homelessness and substance use issues. Many Windsor residents refuse to come into the core due to what they read or see on the news.</li> <li>• In some cases, news stories about violent crime have incorrectly situated events in the downtown core, further leading the public to view the downtown as unsafe.</li> <li>• Many stakeholders suggested that there should be a concerted effort to develop a downtown communications strategy to combat the narrative that the core is unsafe and highlight positive news stories to residents.</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Help People Feel Safe & Want to Visit Downtown (6/6)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Some community members lack compassion for unhoused people or individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We heard that some community members feel unsafe by seeing large concentrations of unhoused people in the downtown core, particularly at night.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Windsor has traditionally not seen this level of visible homelessness in the community, adding to a feeling of unease amongst some residents.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some stakeholders mentioned that Windsor should launch a media awareness campaign to educate the community regarding homelessness and mental health and addictions issues to help inspire a sense of understanding and compassion.</li> <li>• Stakeholders noted that most unhoused people are harmless and often themselves feel unsafe in the downtown core.</li> <li>• Stakeholders mentioned that a communications strategy that helps to inspire greater compassion can go a long way to combatting feelings of unease and help community members interact with unhoused people in a respectful and safe manner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>There is a need to increase the number of residents living downtown</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for greater housing options across the housing continuum was highlighted by many stakeholders and community members.</li> <li>• While housing was largely out of scope for this project, it is important to recognize that expanded housing options are critical to making progress on three of the opportunity areas highlighted in this report: helping people feel safe and want to visit downtown; better supporting people experiencing mental health and / or addictions crises; and better supporting unhoused people.</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises (1/5)

The following is a synthesis of what we heard with respect to supporting people experiencing mental health and / or addictions crises:

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis are often not receiving the right supports, in the right place, at the right time</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When individuals are experiencing a mental health or / addictions crisis, they are traditionally either brought to Windsor Regional Hospital Emergency Department or a Windsor Police service facility.</li> <li>• There is a lack of consensus amongst stakeholders regarding the efficacy of Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare’s Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre and Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Care Centre (MHAUCC). Many stakeholders do not think the Centres provide effective supports for individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This perception is largely due to:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Centres’ hours of operation:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 8:00am to 10:00pm Monday to Friday and 8:00am to 8:00pm Saturday and Sunday for walk-in services at the Community Crisis Centre.</li> <li>➤ 11:00am to 7:00pm Monday to Friday for MHAUCC.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Significant entry requirements: MHAUCC advises that individuals should go to the Windsor Regional Hospital Emergency Department if they are experiencing acutely suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviour, substance-related intoxication, acute psychosis, possible medical issues, severe alcohol dependency, or aggressive or violent behaviour with risk to others.                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Entry requirements can prevent individuals with high mental health and / or addictions needs and individuals with low-to-moderate mental health and / or addictions needs from receiving the services they need.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source(s): [Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare - Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre](#) and [Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare – Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Care Centre](#).

## Key Themes | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises (2/5)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis are often not receiving the right supports, in the right place, at the right time (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, one stakeholder mentioned that Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare must “be more transparent with service providers about who they can treat [...] if they are branding their Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre as somewhere where individuals experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis can receive help, they should be up front that they only want to serve people who are low acuity.”</li> <li>• The Centre’s lack of support for individuals with “substance-related intoxication” was noted specifically by some stakeholders as a significant barrier to supporting individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis with mild to moderate drug toxicity. Stakeholders mentioned that individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis with mild to moderate drug toxicity are only able to receive support at the Windsor Regional Hospital Emergency Department, putting significant pressure on hospital staff and the Windsor Police Service, as an officer must wait with individuals until they are admitted.</li> <li>• However, other stakeholders view Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare’s Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre as a “barrier-free facility” for individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis.</li> <li>• The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Windsor-Essex County’s Safe Beds Program is an option for some individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis but not all. For example, there are only 4 beds and individuals must not be at risk for harming themselves or others to be eligible for a program stay.</li> <li>• The Windsor Regional Hospital Emergency Department or a Windsor Police service facility are generally seen by stakeholders as the only 24/7 options where individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis can stabilize, access appropriate care, and be connected with services and supports.</li> </ul>

Source(s): [Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare - Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre](#) and [Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare – Mental Health and Addictions Urgent Care Centre](#).

## Key Themes | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises (3/5)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis are often not receiving the right supports, in the right place, at the right time (continued)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare is seeking to move its existing Crisis and Mental Wellness Centre closer to downtown Windsor (i.e., from 736-744 Ouellette Ave. to 500 Ouellette Ave.).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They aim to be in the building by Spring-Summer 2024 and are seeking approval from Ontario Health and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit to do so.</li> <li>○ In the new building, they seek to provide a one-stop-shop for mental health and / or addictions services, including a dedicated urgent care facility for individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis.</li> <li>○ Many stakeholders consulted do not support the movement of beds from Ouellette campus of Windsor Regional Hospital over to Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare. For example, some stakeholders do not perceive Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare as providing effective supports for individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions crises currently, while others worry that individuals experiencing a mental health and / or addictions crisis will not be able to receive other necessary supports (e.g., physical healthcare), in Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare’s preferred model.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In addition, while generally recognized as important for the community, programs such as the Windsor Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team (M.C.R.R.T), WPS C.O.A.S.T. (Community Outreach and Support Team), and Windsor Police Service and Windsor Regional Hospital Nurse and Police Team (NPT) pilot program are not available around-the-clock.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ M.C.R.R.T is available Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 10:00pm, WPS C.O.A.S.T. is available Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm, and the NPT pilot operates on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays between 1:00pm and 1:00am.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source(s): [Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare – Mental Health and Police Teams](#), [Windsor Police Service – Public News Update](#).

## Key Themes | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises (4/5)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Collaboration between mental health and addictions service providers is generally seen as inadequate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health and addiction service providers in Windsor can view one another as competitors which can contribute to non-ideal client outcomes and prevent the leveraging of shared resources for maximum impact.</li> <li>• For example, the CMHA – Windsor-Essex County and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare are seen by many stakeholders as disconnected from Windsor Regional Hospital. Some stakeholders perceive “territorial debates”(e.g., over the provision of acute care) between these stakeholders are contributing to non-ideal outcomes for community members experiencing mental health and / or addictions crises.</li> </ul>

Source(s): [Windsor-Essex County Health Unit - Consumption and Treatment Services Site](#).

## Key Themes | Better Support People Experiencing Mental Health and / or Addictions Crises (5/5)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>There is a lack of supportive housing available</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many stakeholders noted that supportive housing options are limited in Windsor-Essex for individuals experiencing mental health and / or addictions challenges and funding (both capital and operating) is urgently needed to expand supportive housing.</li> <li>• For example, CMHA’s Homeless Initiative Supportive Housing Program provided 287 beds/units as of 2019. Family Services Windsor-Essex (FSWE) also supports individuals who are chronically homeless or have significant mental health and / or addictions concerns.</li> <li>• Windsor-Essex County’s Central Housing Registry is also seen as outdated by many stakeholders. Stakeholders noted that it is hard to tell how many individuals in the community need supportive housing currently and see the clean up of the Registry as a “quick win” to better support community members.</li> </ul>

Source(s): [City of Windsor - A Report to Inform the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan 2019-2028](#), [Family Services Windsor-Essex - Windsor-Essex Housing Connections](#).



## Key Themes | Better Support Unhoused People

The following is a synthesis of what we heard with respect to better supporting unhoused individuals in Windsor’s downtown:

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Indoor facilities for unhoused people are limited in Windsor’s downtown core</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders mentioned that there is often a high concentration of unhoused people in the downtown core, particularly when nearby shelters discharge in the morning (~9:00am-10:00am) and in the evening when shelter clients can return (~9:00-10:00pm).                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For some community members, seeing unhoused people contributes to a perception that downtown is unsafe (e.g., seeing unhoused people take refuge near or inside vacant buildings or parking garages).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• While the City’s Homelessness &amp; Housing Help Hub (H4) facility is run by dedicated staff who provide vital services to unhoused people in the downtown core, the facility is seen as limited at times in its ability to offer a truly low-barrier, drop-in style environment where unhoused persons can come and go for rest and relaxation.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some stakeholders noted that if the City had an alternative, low-barrier facility where unhoused people could go during the daytime hours, this could help reduce the visibility of homelessness in the downtown core and better connect unhoused people with supports and services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some stakeholders mentioned that finding a permanent home for the H4 facility should be a priority for the City, as well as increasing its operating hours until overnight shelters open.</li> <li>• Stakeholders also noted that the City lacks a 24/7 warming center to serve unhoused people during the upcoming winter months and that the City could more proactively prepare to address this need.</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Better Support and Partner with Windsor’s Service Delivery Partners (1/2)

The following is a synthesis of what we heard with respect to better supporting Windsor’s service delivery partners:

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Social service providers can experience significant funding challenges due to City funding processes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some social service providers mentioned that they have had challenges being paid by the City on time, which creates significant financial pressure and stress.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Because some payments are not automatic, the receipt of City funding can be inconsistent, creating challenges for some providers in meeting their financial obligations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some social service providers mentioned there is an opportunity for the City to demonstrate its commitment to their partnership and respect for their work by ensuring they receive funding on time.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Many social service providers are skeptical of engaging with the City</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the social service providers engaged do not feel as if the City engages them meaningfully, regularly, or at the right time. For example, some housing and homelessness service providers in downtown Windsor mentioned that they were not engaged during the development of the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan. Other social service providers are frustrated that they did not have an opportunity to contribute their expertise in the design of SafePoint.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders feel like the City is not transparent when it engages with them. For example, some stakeholders feel that the purpose of City consultation or how feedback will be used is often not clear. Others mentioned that when they provide feedback, they do not often hear back from the City regarding how their input was used; this can create confusion especially when they see the City making decisions that conflict with their feedback.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders believe that the City could better leverage their expertise in program and service design and evaluation (e.g., regarding a diversion program in City shelters).</li> </ul>

## Key Themes | Better Support and Partner with Windsor’s Service Delivery Partners (2/2)

What We Heard	Additional Details
<p><b>Silos can prevent impact maximization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the Downtown Safety Table is generally seen as a positive step in enhancing coordination, some stakeholders spoke to the existence of silos within City government and between the City and its partners. For example, the City of Windsor’s By-Law Compliance Committee was created to increase information sharing around by-law enforcement across several City departments, recognizing the existence of silos.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders are frustrated by the lack of willingness of other stakeholders to engage with them to address issues of shared interest and mentioned that those not willing to engage are at risk of getting “left behind.”</li> <li>• Some stakeholders see an opportunity to minimize independent initiatives and increase information sharing to maximize community impact. For example, through enhanced coordination between frontline staff, social service providers, and regional leadership.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Questions exist regarding how successful Windsor has been in implementing plans and strategies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windsor is perceived by many stakeholders as having “a lot of plans, but little action.” For example, in conversations with stakeholders, several plans were mentioned, such as the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan, the Windsor-Essex Community Opioid &amp; Substance Strategy, and the Windsor Essex Regional Community Safety &amp; Well-Being Plan.</li> <li>• Many of the stakeholders and community members consulted are confused regarding the current state of existing plans (e.g., whether plans are currently being implemented or updated and by whom) and if and / or how plans relate to one another.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders are concerned that the plans have been developed in isolation from one another, preventing the maximization of synergies and creating risk of effort duplication.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders are also concerned that learnings and knowledge are not being applied from one plan to another.</li> </ul>

# Appendix B: Consulted Stakeholder List

# Consulted Stakeholder List

The following organizations provided input into Windsor’s Downtown Revitalization Plan:

Type of Stakeholder	Organization					
Social Services / Outreach / Rapid Responders	• Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare	• Canadian Mental Health Association	• Windsor-Essex Health Unit	• Essex-Windsor EMS	• Windsor Regional Hospital	
	• Downtown Mission	• Salvation Army	• Welcome Centre Shelter	• Positive Pathways	• Windsor-Essex Community Health Centre	
	• Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative	• Family Services Windsor Essex	• Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario			
Enforcement & Security	• Windsor Police Service	• Downtown Safety Association	• ACS Security			
Downtown Businesses / Residents	• Downtown Windsor BIA	• Casino Windsor	• WKND Entertainment	• Rocket Innovation Studio	• The Vanguard Team	
Other Stakeholders	• City of Windsor (elected officials and various departmental staff)	• Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County	• Black Council Windsor-Essex	• South Asian Centre	• University of Windsor	
	• St. Clair College	• Housing Information Services	• Glos Associates Inc.	• S-A-F Advisory		

# Appendix C: Downtown Revitalization Survey – Detailed Outputs

# Downtown Revitalization Survey

The Downtown Revitalization Survey was launched on Wednesday September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The survey remained open until Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Survey uptake was strong.** For example, within the first 24 hours of survey launch, over 1,000 responses were received; the survey also had a high completion rate. The survey gained traction in several news outlets in the Windsor-Essex region.

The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative information. A summary of survey outputs is included on the following slides.

## Key statistics on the Downtown Revitalization Survey include:



3,569 total responses.



11 minutes, 26 seconds – the average time it took for people to complete the entire survey.



67% of respondents completed the survey within the first three days of survey launch.



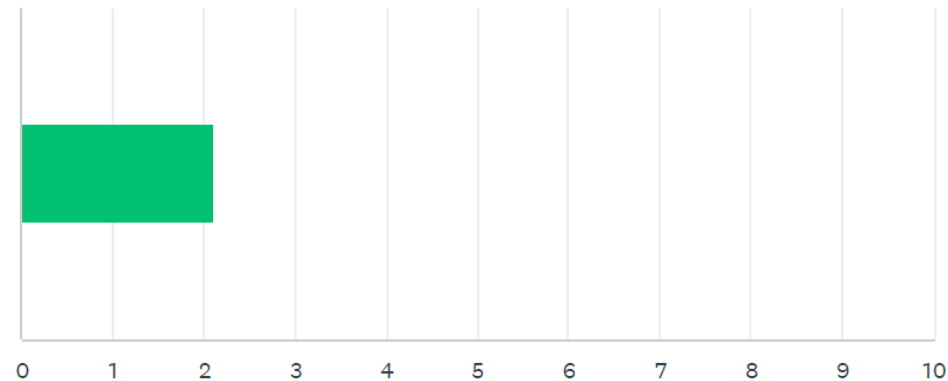
79% completion rate – the percentage of survey takers that completed the entire survey.

## Question 1: How safe do you feel?

Respondents were asked to rate their feeling / perception of safety in the downtown core on a scale from 1 – 5. 1 indicated that they do not feel safe at all, and 5 indicated they feel completely safe. The average score was just over 2 – indicating most respondents have some level of unease in Windsor’s downtown core.

Q1 On a scale from 1-5, what is your overall feeling / perception of safety in the downtown core? (1 = I do not feel safe at all; 5 = I feel completely safe)

Answered: 3,569 Skipped: 0



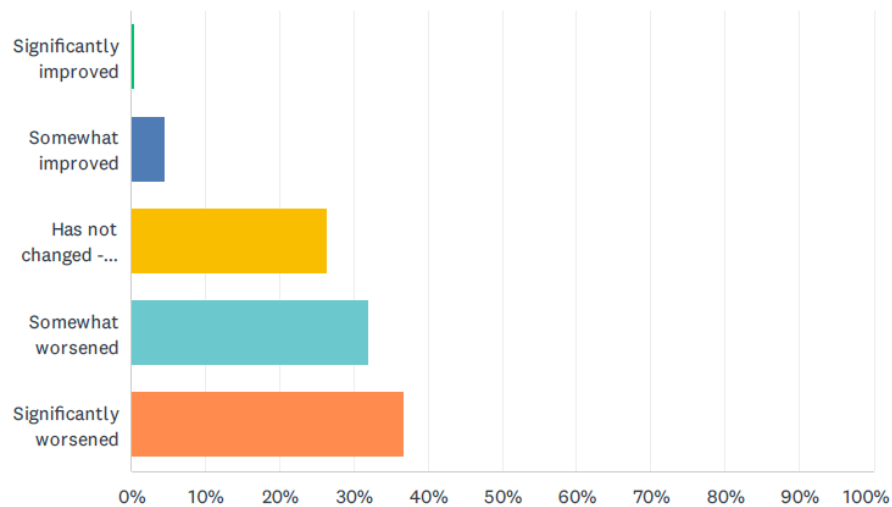


## Question 2: How has safety changed in the past 12 months?

Respondents were asked to indicate how their feeling / perception of safety had changed in the past year. Most respondents (nearly 70%) indicated that their perception of safety had decreased in the last year, with less than 5% indicating their perception of safety had increased.

Q2 How has your feeling / perception of safety downtown changed in the last year? Select one option

Answered: 3,569 Skipped: 0



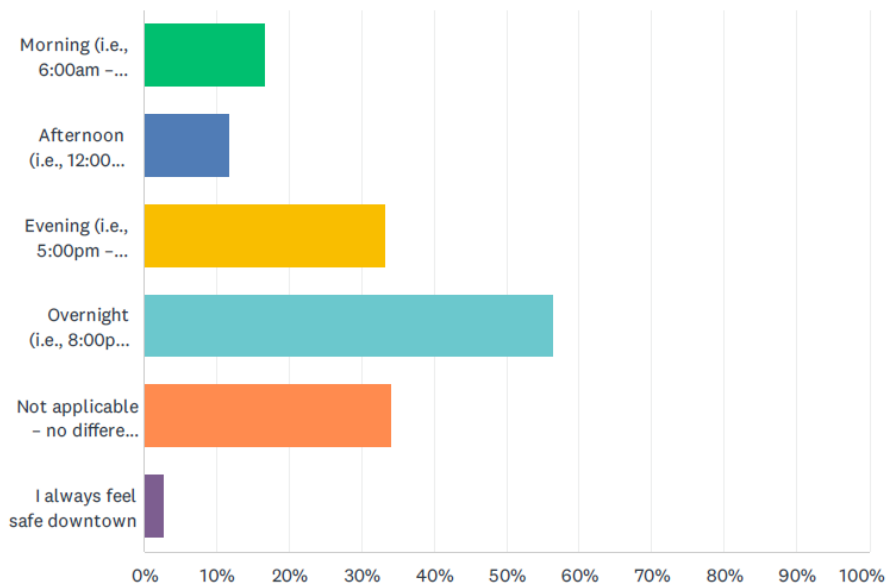
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Significantly improved	0.42% 15
Somewhat improved	4.40% 157
Has not changed - neither improved nor worsened	26.48% 945
Somewhat worsened	32.00% 1,142
Significantly worsened	36.70% 1,310
TOTAL	3,569

## Question 3: At different times of day?

Respondents were asked to indicate how safe they feel at different times of the day. Most respondents (56%) indicated that they feel less safe overnight (i.e., 8pm to 6am). Around one third selected no difference in time of day. Less than 3% of respondents reported that they always feel safe in the downtown.

Q3 At what time of the day do you feel less safe in the downtown core?  
Select all that apply

Answered: 3,569 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Morning (i.e., 6:00am – 12:00pm)	16.67%	595
Afternoon (i.e., 12:00pm – 5:00pm)	11.82%	422
Evening (i.e., 5:00pm – 8:00pm)	33.20%	1,185
Overnight (i.e., 8:00pm – 6:00am)	56.51%	2,017
Not applicable – no difference depending on time of day	34.07%	1,216
I always feel safe downtown	2.80%	100
Total Respondents: 3,569		

Note: This was a “select all that apply” question, so respondents could indicate multiple options.

## Question 4: Specific areas of concern? (1/2)

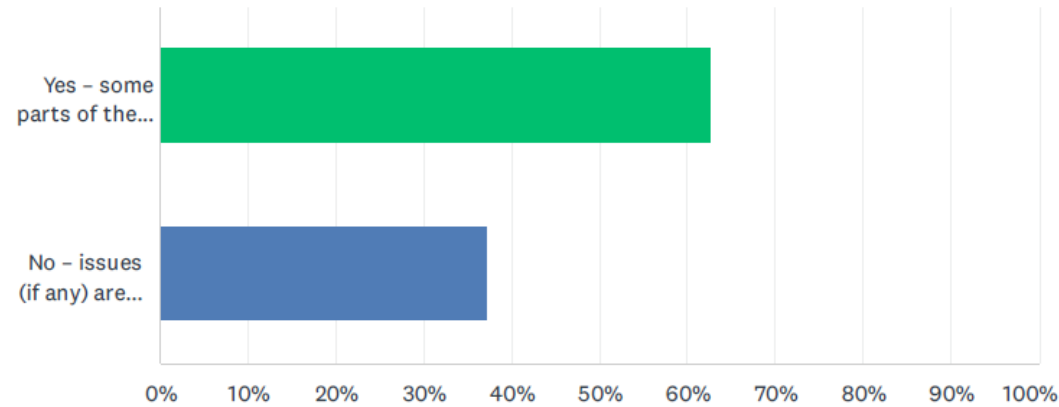
Respondents were asked to indicate if there were parts of the downtown that were of particular concern. For those who chose “Yes”, the survey provided an optional written feedback box to explain. Within these responses, the following themes emerged:

- Many respondents expressed concern about the visible presence of unhoused persons and substance use around the Downtown Mission, Ouellette Avenue, and the Glengarry Avenue areas. Open drug use, harassment, and other disruptive behaviors contribute to feelings of unease for many community members.
- There is a high number of vacant, boarded-up, or neglected buildings, particularly on Ouellette Avenue and Wyandotte Street. These areas are often associated with homelessness and open substance use.
- Respondents frequently mentioned feeling unsafe in areas with low foot traffic, poor lighting, or a high concentration of unhoused people. Many expressed a desire for improved security measures and increased police presence.
- Many respondents highlighted the need for more services and supports for unhoused persons and those struggling with mental health and addictions. Addressing these root causes could improve the overall safety of the downtown area.
- Respondents often mention the need for revitalization and investment in the downtown area, including filling vacant storefronts, improving infrastructure, and creating more attractions to draw people to the area.

## Question 4: Specific areas of concern? (2/2)

Q4 Are there any parts of Windsor’s downtown that stand out as areas of concern or in need of special attention? Select one option

Answered: 3,569 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes – some parts of the downtown are worse than others	62.68%	2,237
No – issues (if any) are present across the downtown	37.32%	1,332
TOTAL		3,569

## Question 5: Any initiatives working well or successful? (1/2)

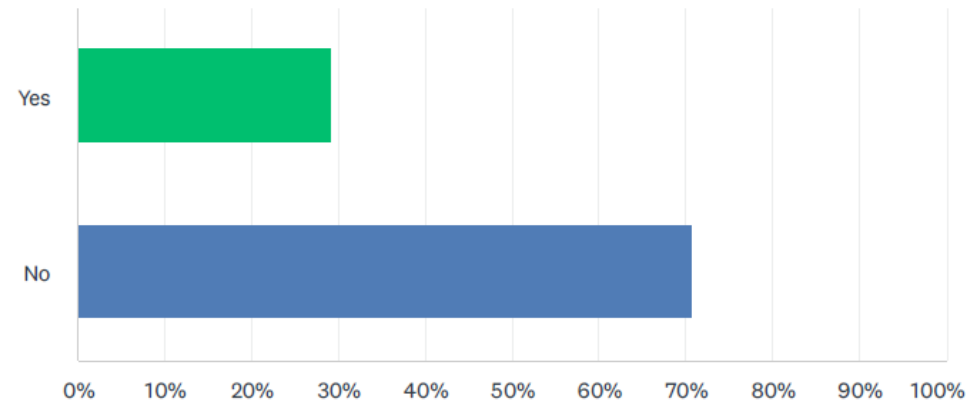
Respondents were asked to indicate if there were existing initiatives already happening downtown that have been successful. For those who chose “Yes”, the survey provided an optional written feedback box to explain. Within these responses, the following two themes emerged:

- **Community events:** Many respondents highlighted the success of existing community events such as the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market, the Windsor International Film Festival, and Open Streets Windsor. These events are seen as bringing people into the downtown core and contributing to a vibrant community atmosphere.
- **Increased patrols:** Several respondents noted the positive impact of an increased police presence downtown, including foot and bike patrols. Increased patrols have reportedly improved the sense of safety and security downtown for many community members.

## Question 5: Any initiatives working well or successful? (2/2)

Q5 Are there any initiatives happening in downtown Windsor that are working well or have been successful? Select one option

Answered: 3,569 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.22%	1,043
No	70.78%	2,526
TOTAL		3,569

## Question 6: Strengths?

Respondents were asked to indicate what they believe are the top strengths of Windsor’s downtown core. A total of 3,038 respondents completed this question, with 531 choosing to skip. From respondents’ perspectives, the top strengths of Windsor’s downtown core are:

- **Riverfront Proximity:** Windsor’s riverfront was frequently mentioned as a key strength, offering scenic views.
- **Diverse Dining and Entertainment:** The presence of various restaurants, bars, and entertainment venues, including the casino, are highlighted as attractions that bring people into the downtown core.
- **Cultural and Artistic Amenities:** The downtown core was recognized by respondents for its cultural amenities, such as murals and outdoor art and a music scene.
- **Community Events and Markets:** Events like the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market, the Windsor International Film Festival, Open Streets Windsor, and other community events are seen as strengths, contributing to the vibrancy of the downtown core.
- **Postsecondary Institutions:** The presence of postsecondary institutions in the downtown core (i.e., the University of Windsor and St. Clair College) are seen as beneficial by attracting students and contributing to the local economy.
- **Mental Health and / or Addictions Outreach Programs:** The Windsor Police Service and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare M.C.R.R.T and C.O.A.S.T programs are seen favorably by many community members, as is RE/ACT Windsor-Essex.

## Question 7: What would make you want to spend more time downtown?

Respondents were asked to indicate what would encourage them to spend more time in Windsor’s downtown core. A total of 3,244 respondents completed this question, with 325 choosing to skip. The following themes emerged regarding what would make people want to spend more time in Windsor’s downtown core:

- **Safety and Cleanliness:** Many respondents expressed concerns about safety, particularly in relation to homelessness and substance abuse. They suggested an increased police presence and better lighting as potential solutions to spending more time downtown. Cleanliness was also a concern, with calls for regular street cleaning and garbage collection.
- **Addressing Homelessness and Substance Abuse:** There were numerous calls for better support for unhoused persons and those struggling with addiction.
- **Business Development:** Many respondents expressed a desire for a greater variety of businesses, particularly retail stores and quality restaurants, to bring more people into Windsor’s downtown core.
- **Events and Entertainment:** Many respondents suggested that more events, such as festivals, concerts, and community activities, would make the downtown core more appealing to visit.
- **Urban Design Improvements:** Suggestions included making the downtown area more pedestrian-friendly, creating more green spaces, and improving parking. Some respondents also suggested closing off certain streets to vehicle traffic to create pedestrian promenades.

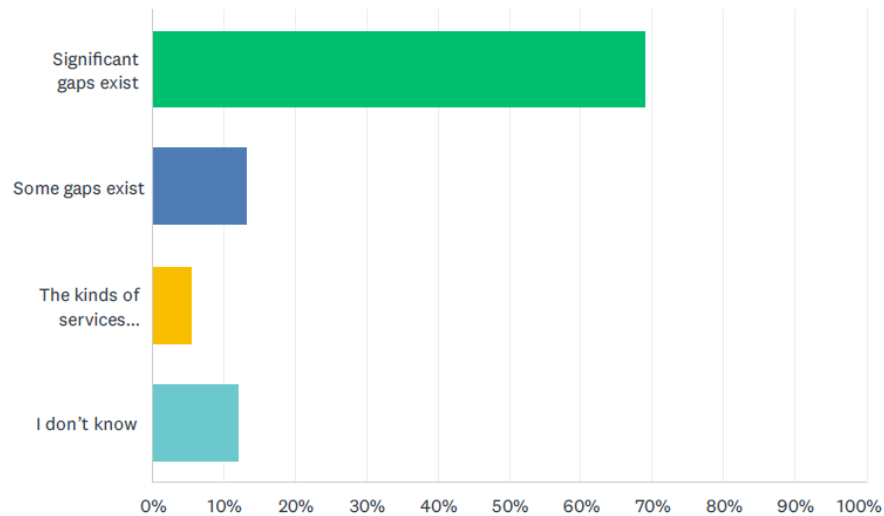


## Question 8: Gaps in the kinds of services that exist?

Respondents were asked to indicate if they felt there were gaps in the kinds of services that exist for vulnerable populations downtown. Over 80% of respondents indicated that gaps currently exist (either “some gaps” or “significant gaps”) for vulnerable populations, with less than 6% reporting that services are currently adequate.

Q8 Do you feel there are gaps in the kinds of services that exist for vulnerable populations in Windsor’s downtown core? For example, mental health and/or addictions services or services for unhoused persons? Select one option

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Significant gaps exist	69.05% 2,142
Some gaps exist	13.22% 410
The kinds of services offered are adequate	5.64% 175
I don't know	12.09% 375
TOTAL	3,102

## Question 9: What is missing? (1/2)

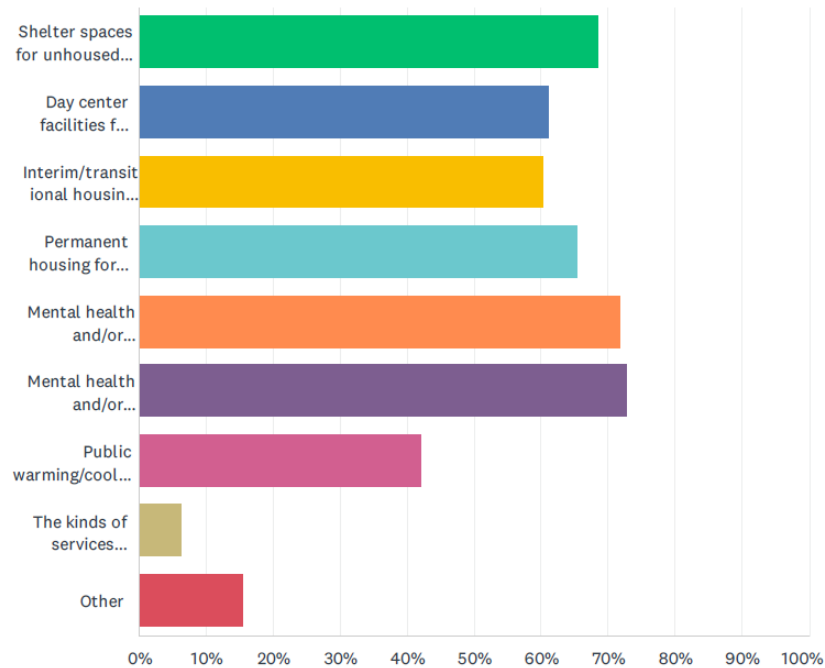
Respondents were asked to indicate what types of services or supports are missing in Windsor’s downtown. Most respondents feel that mental health and / or addictions supports and spaces for unhoused persons are missing. Less than 7% of respondents reported that the kinds of services offered are adequate. For those who chose “Other”, the survey provided an optional written feedback box to explain. Within these responses, the following five themes emerged:

- **Housing:** There's a strong call for more supportive and affordable housing options in the downtown core, particularly for those dealing with mental health and addictions crises.
- **Mental health and addictions:** Many responses highlight the need for more comprehensive and accessible mental health and addictions services. This includes 24/7 mental health support services, rehabilitation centers, and more funding for existing services.
- **Employment and skills:** Several responses suggest the need for resources and programming to help individuals gain skills and secure employment. This includes providing resources for individuals to get back on their feet and secure jobs.
- **Law enforcement:** Some responses express a desire for increased law enforcement presence to better ensure a safe environment downtown. This includes not just a visible police presence but also the stricter enforcement of laws where appropriate.
- **Location of services:** There's a recurring sentiment that services for vulnerable populations, such as the downtown Consumption and Treatment Site and facilities that provide mental health and / or addictions supports, should not all be clustered in the downtown core. Some respondents suggest moving these services to less central locations.

## Question 9: What is missing? (2/2)

Q9 What types of services or supports are missing in Windsor’s downtown core? Select all that apply

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Shelter spaces for unhoused persons during the evening/night	68.63%	2,129
Day center facilities for unhoused persons	61.28%	1,901
Interim/transitional housing for unhoused persons	60.41%	1,874
Permanent housing for unhoused persons	65.51%	2,032
Mental health and/or additions supports for persons in crisis during the day	71.79%	2,227
Mental health and/or additions supports for persons in crisis during the evening/night	72.89%	2,261
Public warming/cooling centres	42.13%	1,307
The kinds of services offered are adequate	6.45%	200
Other	15.67%	486
Total Respondents: 3,102		

## Question 10: Gaps in when services are available? (1/2)

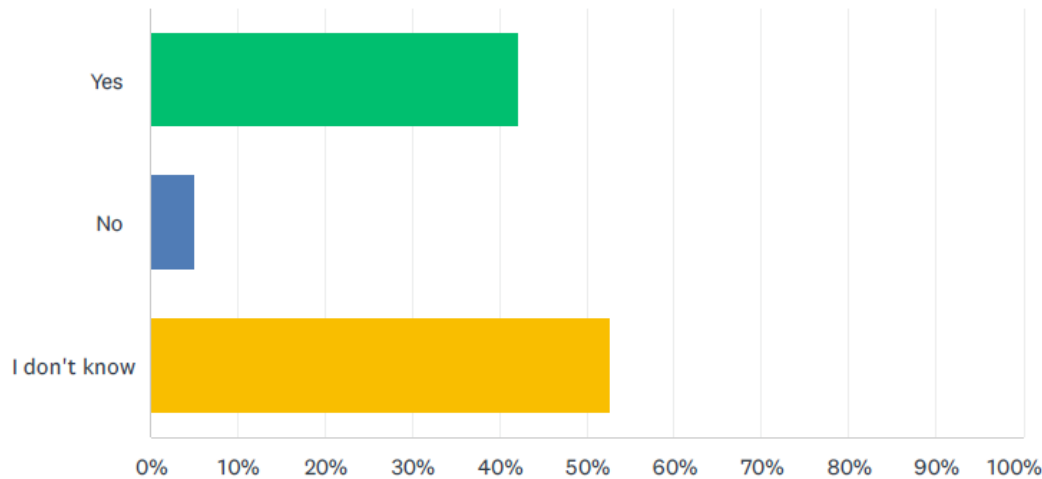
Respondents were asked to indicate whether they believe there are gaps in when services are available to vulnerable populations. The following themes emerged in their responses:

- Many services, particularly those for mental health and addictions, operate primarily during standard business hours, leaving a gap in the evenings and overnight when many individuals may be in need.
- Many individuals require round-the-clock care and support, particularly those with severe mental health and / or addictions issues or those experiencing homelessness. However, 24/7 services are often lacking or insufficient (e.g., mental health crisis supports).
- There is a high prevalence of mental health and substance use issues in downtown Windsor, but available support services are insufficient, leading to increased strain on emergency services and other community resources.
- There is a lack of affordable and supportive housing options, leading to increased homelessness and individuals being unable to maintain stable living situations.
- There is a need for more proactive outreach services to serve individuals experiencing mental health and addictions issues and homelessness. Respondents see the current system as often requiring individuals to seek help themselves, which can be challenging for those in crisis or those without stable living situations.
- Many vulnerable individuals are not aware of the services available to them or struggle to navigate the system to access these services.

## Question 10: Gaps in when services are available? (2/2)

Q10 Are there gaps in when services are available to vulnerable populations?

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	42.20%	1,309
No	5.06%	157
I don't know	52.74%	1,636
TOTAL		3,102

## Question 11: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to law enforcement? (1/2)

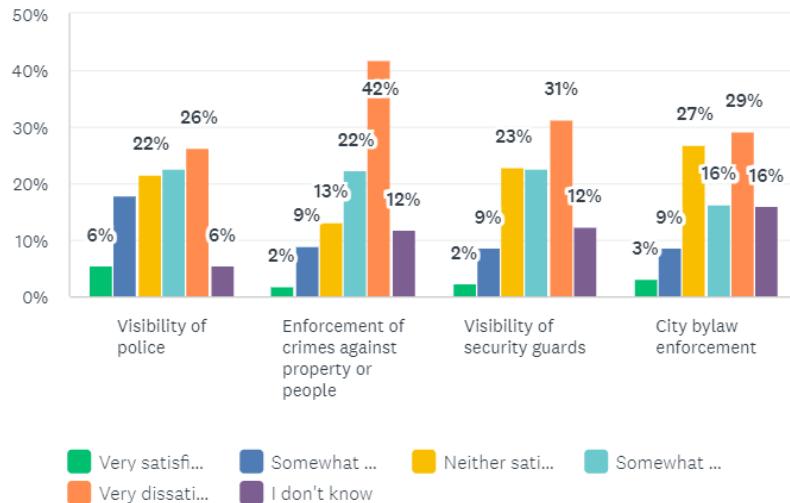
Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with various statements related to law enforcement.

- Around half of respondents feel that the visibility of police and security guards could be increased in the downtown core.
- 42% of respondents reported being “very dissatisfied” with the enforcement of crimes against property or people in the downtown core, with only 11% somewhat or very satisfied.
- Nearly half of respondents also reported being somewhat or very dissatisfied with the City’s by-law enforcement efforts.
- Detailed results for each statement are included on the following slide.

# Question 11: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to law enforcement? (2/2)

How satisfied are you with each of the following in Windsor’s downtown core related to law enforcement? Please indicate your choice between very satisfied and very dissatisfied.

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I DON'T KNOW
▼ Visibility of police	6% 175	18% 554	22% 673	23% 706	26% 819	6% 175
▼ Enforcement of crimes against property or people	2% 61	9% 281	13% 407	22% 691	42% 1,295	12% 367
▼ Visibility of security guards	2% 72	9% 269	23% 711	23% 699	31% 968	12% 383
▼ City bylaw enforcement	3% 96	9% 267	27% 835	16% 504	29% 904	16% 496

## Question 12: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to downtown appearance & vibrancy? (1/3)

Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with various statements related to the appearance and vibrancy of Windsor's downtown.

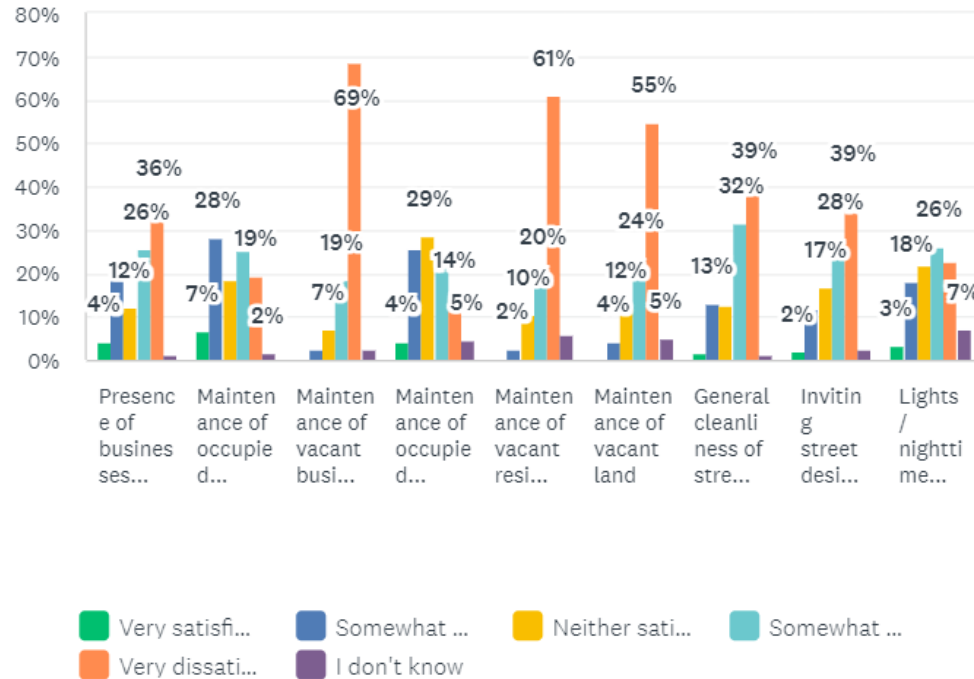
- The lack of maintenance of vacant businesses, residential buildings, and land is a common concern for residents.
- For example, nearly 90% of respondents are somewhat or very dissatisfied with the maintenance of vacant businesses in the downtown core.
- Respondents are concerned with the cleanliness of streets and sidewalks downtown, general street design (e.g., the availability of high-quality seating and spaces for relaxing, meeting with friends, etc.), and nighttime lighting and visibility.
- Detailed results for each statement are included on the following slides.



## Question 12: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to downtown appearance & vibrancy? (2/3)

How satisfied are you with each of the following in Windsor’s downtown core related to downtown appearance & vibrancy? Please indicate your choice between very satisfied and very dissatisfied.

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



## Question 12: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to downtown appearance & vibrancy? (3/3)

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I DON'T KNOW
▼ Presence of businesses that enliven downtown (e.g., local restaurants)	4% 125	21% 640	12% 383	26% 802	36% 1,113	1% 39
▼ Maintenance of occupied businesses	7% 211	28% 876	19% 581	25% 778	19% 598	2% 58
▼ Maintenance of vacant businesses	1% 17	2% 77	7% 216	19% 580	69% 2,129	3% 83
▼ Maintenance of occupied residences (homes)	4% 128	26% 803	29% 890	22% 686	14% 445	5% 150
▼ Maintenance of vacant residences (homes)	0% 14	2% 72	10% 323	20% 609	61% 1,900	6% 184
▼ Maintenance of vacant land	1% 19	4% 127	12% 380	24% 731	55% 1,694	5% 151
▼ General cleanliness of streets and sidewalks	2% 56	13% 409	13% 395	32% 983	39% 1,223	1% 36
▼ Inviting street design	2% 63	12% 367	17% 520	28% 861	39% 1,210	3% 81
▼ Lights / nighttime visibility on streets and sidewalks	3% 107	18% 568	22% 678	26% 815	23% 710	7% 224

## Question 13: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public washrooms? (1/3)

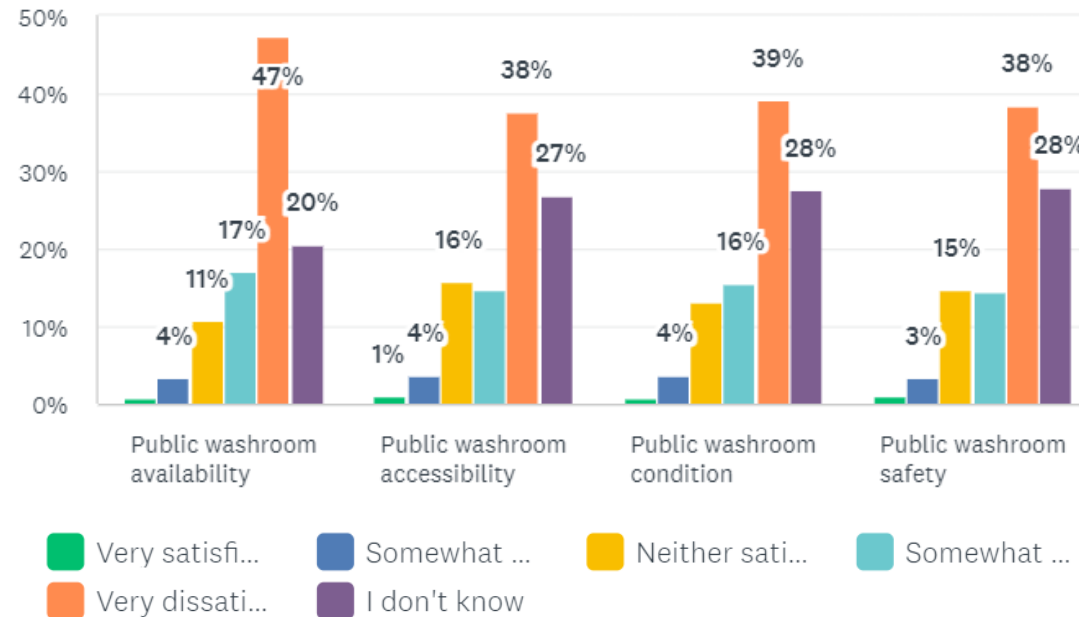
Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with various statements related to public washrooms.

- Most residents are not satisfied with the availability, accessibility, condition (e.g., general cleanliness and maintenance), or safety of public washrooms in Windsor’s downtown core.
- Very few individuals reported being satisfied with the state of public washrooms in Windsor’s downtown core.
- Detailed results for each statement are included on the following slides.

## Question 13: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public washrooms? (2/3)

How satisfied are you with each of the following in Windsor’s downtown core related to public washrooms? Please indicate your choice between very satisfied and very dissatisfied.

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



## Question 13: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public washrooms? (3/3)

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I DON'T KNOW
Public washroom availability	1% 26	4% 109	11% 335	17% 527	47% 1,471	20% 634
Public washroom accessibility	1% 33	4% 117	16% 489	15% 459	38% 1,171	27% 833
Public washroom condition	1% 25	4% 113	13% 408	16% 482	39% 1,218	28% 856
Public washroom safety	1% 31	3% 108	15% 459	14% 449	38% 1,188	28% 867

## Question 14: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to community facilities & infrastructure? (1/3)

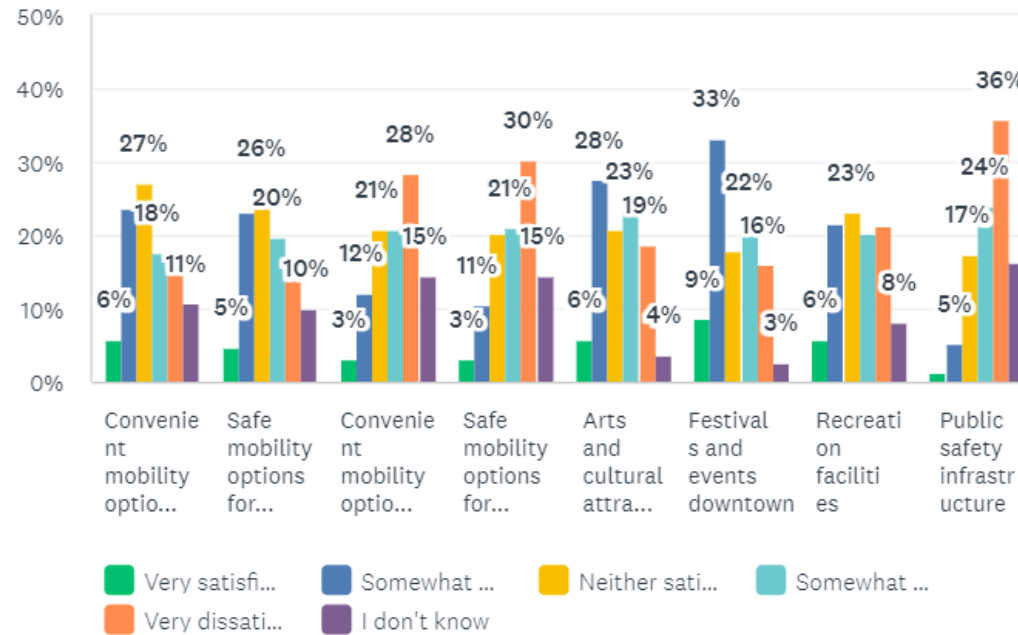
Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with various statements related to community facilities and infrastructure.

- Respondents are split regarding their satisfaction with convenient and safe mobility options for pedestrians in Windsor’s downtown core. More respondents are dissatisfied with mobility options for cyclists.
- A higher share of residents are satisfied with the City’s arts and cultural attractions, festivals and events downtown, and recreational facilities.
- 60% of residents are not satisfied with public safety infrastructure in the downtown core (e.g., emergency safety buttons, public telephones, charging outlets).
- Detailed results for each statement are included on the following slides.

## Question 14: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to community facilities & infrastructure? (2/3)

How satisfied are you with each of the following in Windsor’s downtown core related to community facilities & infrastructure? Please indicate your choice between very satisfied and very dissatisfied.

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



## Question 14: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to community facilities & infrastructure? (3/3)

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I DON'T KNOW
Convenient mobility options for pedestrians	6% 179	24% 734	27% 843	18% 546	15% 469	11% 331
Safe mobility options for pedestrians	5% 151	23% 716	26% 821	20% 613	16% 493	10% 308
Convenient mobility options for cyclists	3% 98	12% 378	21% 646	21% 646	28% 884	15% 450
Safe mobility options for cyclists	3% 96	11% 330	20% 629	21% 655	30% 940	15% 452
Arts and cultural attractions	6% 183	28% 858	21% 641	23% 724	19% 580	4% 116
Festivals and events downtown	9% 269	33% 1,026	18% 552	22% 674	16% 497	3% 84
Recreation facilities	6% 182	22% 667	23% 718	20% 625	21% 660	8% 250
Public safety infrastructure	1% 42	5% 163	17% 540	24% 741	36% 1,107	16% 509



## Question 15: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public communications? (1/3)

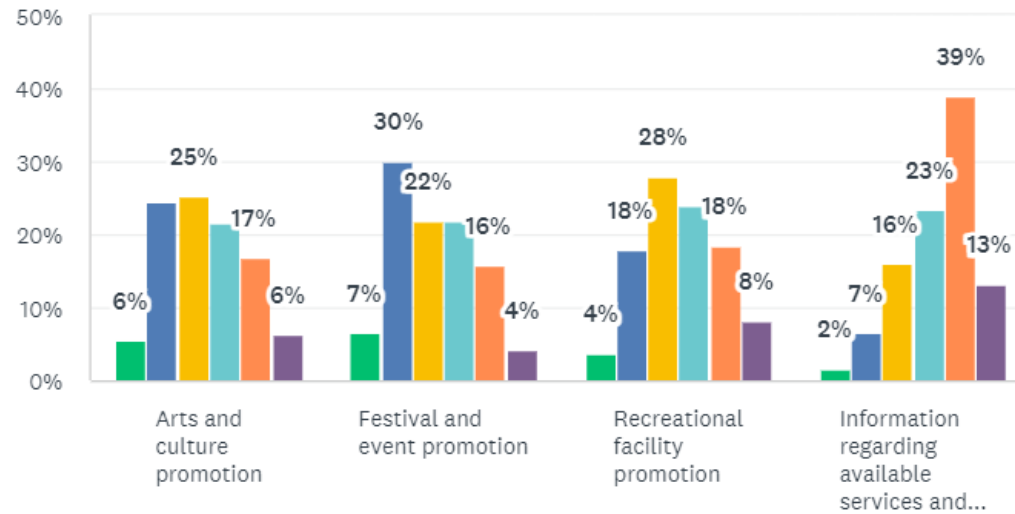
Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with various statements related to public communications.

- Results from respondents were fairly split regarding the satisfaction with the promotion of local arts and cultural attractions, festivals and events, and recreational facilities in the downtown.
- However, there was a notable dissatisfaction with information regarding available services and supports in the downtown core (e.g., related to mental health and / or addictions).
- Detailed results for each statement are included on the following slides.

## Question 15: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public communications? (2/3)

How satisfied are you with each of the following in Windsor’s downtown core related to public communications? Please indicate your choice between very satisfied and very dissatisfied.

Answered: 3,102 Skipped: 467



## Question 15: How satisfied are you with each of the following in the downtown related to public communications? (3/3)

	VERY SATISFIED	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	I DON'T KNOW
Arts and culture promotion	6% 175	25% 762	25% 783	22% 668	17% 521	6% 193
Festival and event promotion	7% 206	30% 929	22% 674	22% 674	16% 489	4% 130
Recreational facility promotion	4% 115	18% 556	28% 864	24% 740	18% 570	8% 257
Information regarding available services and supports	2% 48	7% 206	16% 502	23% 728	39% 1,206	13% 412

## Survey Demographics

StrategyCorp received over 3,500 total responses to the Downtown Revitalization Survey. A summary of the demographic information collected through the survey includes:

- 17% of respondents are full-time residents of downtown Windsor, with another 20% working or owning a business downtown.
- 37% of respondents are full-time residents of Windsor but do not live in the downtown area.
- For respondents living in Windsor, Ward 3 was the most common ward reported (14%), followed closely by Ward 4 (13%). Note that 21% of respondents did not know their ward or preferred not to answer.
- The ages of most respondents were clustered between 25-34 (18%), 35-44 (21%), 45-54 (21%), and 55-64 years (18%).
- Women comprised 55% of total respondents.

# Appendix D: Environmental Scan

# Environmental Scan Context

**This external environmental scan aims to provide the City of Windsor with an understanding of leading practices for downtown revitalization that other municipalities have adopted. Through the scan, we aim to provide the City with a snapshot of initiatives that comparator municipalities are implementing that could be applicable in the context of downtown Windsor.**

This research focused on exploring policies, incentives, and programs that encourage ‘revitalization’ of downtown cores across various jurisdictions. StrategyCorp also reviewed insights from key jurisdictions that emerged following broad research as the most applicable case studies for the City.

The table below summarizes other key information about the methodology and focus of this research scan. The remainder of this section provides findings from this research that have been identified as most relevant to the City of Windsor’s context.

## METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW



# Camera Surveillance (1/2)

Camera surveillance programs revolve around the use of technology and related systems to monitor public spaces to prevent crime, enhance security, and facilitate law enforcement. These programs are often implemented by local authorities but can also involve partnerships between government entities and local communities, and private organizations. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

## INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Perceived Crime Deterrence** | The presence of closed-circuit television (“CCTV”) cameras are perceived to deter crime. The rationalization behind such programs is that human behaviour will change once people know they are being filmed. Studies in the US and Europe demonstrate that the presence of surveillance cameras can reduce property crimes and crimes such as pick-pocketing.

**Investigation and Evidence** | Surveillance cameras can support police investigations and provide evidence that can be used in court. They can also help identify suspects, track movement, and provide critical information in a shorter period of time.

**Real-Time Information** | Camera surveillance systems in public spaces can provide real-time information that is valuable for traffic management and emergency response. Data collected can be used to detect and respond to accidents and emergencies, monitor traffic flow, and improve overall safety. Additionally, data collected can be analyzed to identify patterns and trends in criminal activity allowing municipalities to allocate resources more efficiently and effectively.

## STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Privacy Concerns** | CCTV programs typically operate 24/7 with most civilians not understanding how the footage and data is used. CCTV cameras in public spaces capture the activities of all individuals present in a particular space. For many, the presence of CCTV in public spaces can cause increased anxiety and ultimately may deter people from using public spaces that are monitored. Furthermore, vulnerable communities may be placed at further risk of marginalization.

**Cost of CCTV** | Installation, maintenance, monitoring, data encryption, storage, and abiding by necessary privacy protections are not cheap. In Detroit, private businesses carry the initial cost of \$4K USD to \$6K USD to participate in Project Green Light. In Ontario, the City of Guelph’s Police Services have proposed the installation of 14 closed-circuit surveillance cameras with an associated estimated cost of \$495,000 with an annual operating cost of an estimated \$140,000. While considering the use of camera surveillance programs, a cost benefit analysis is necessary to assess if the cost of installation, maintenance, and operation is worth the benefit of the program to a municipality.

**Active vs. Passive Monitoring** | There is a need to consider the extent to which cameras should be monitored. Active monitoring involves real-time camera monitoring which has associated costs for personnel and equipment. Alternatively, passive monitoring of CCTV only calls for the review of footage after a crime has occurred and there is a need to review footage.

## Camera Surveillance (2/2)

Municipalities are increasingly looking to CCTV cameras as a public safety tool used to mitigate safety risks for residents, local businesses, staff, and visitors. The aim of using CCTV cameras is to deter criminal activity by altering the environment where crime can occur. While these cameras will often not directly impact the levels of violent crime that occur, they can have a positive impact on deterring property offences. Outlined below are examples of CCTV programs used by municipalities similar to Windsor:

### Project Green Light | City of Detroit

To address crime rates in Detroit, reduce violence, and re-establish a sense of safety in the community, the Detroit Police Department established the Real-Time Crime Centre and worked with local businesses to install visible lighting, signage, and high-definition CCTV cameras that directly integrate with the Crime Centre. The aim of this intervention was to enable real-time monitoring and rapid response to crime, while also deterring crime. Participating business's pay \$4K-\$6K USD for the equipment and about \$150 USD per month for maintenance. The initiative started in 2016 with eight (8) participating gas stations, and since then has grown substantially with more businesses signing up to participate.<sup>1</sup> While this has resulted in significant decreases in property crime reports, there has been no statistically significant difference on disorder occurrence or violent crime reporting.<sup>2</sup>

### Downtown CCTV Program | City of Brantford

In 2019, the City of Brantford Council approved a resolution to “establish a Municipal Video Surveillance System within the Core Area in the City of Brantford.” The Downtown Surveillance System - which includes the use of CCTV cameras - responds to security and safety issues such as property damage, unsafe driving practices, and safety issues pertaining to substance use.<sup>3</sup>

### Spotlight Program | City of London

The City of London's Spotlight Program is an intervention aimed at alerting the public that security cameras are present and operating at participating business locations. The City provides businesses that have existing storefront security cameras with a Spotlight Program sticker to place prominently in their storefront window. To participate in this program, businesses can register with the City at no additional cost. The intention is for visible signage in storefronts to deter crime and disturbance, increase feelings of safety by informing the public that cameras are present, and inform the police that video footage is available to support investigations. This intervention is part of the City of London's Core Area Action Plan.<sup>4</sup>

### London Downtown CCTV Program | City of London

Operated by the City of London, CCTV cameras monitor public spaces in London's downtown core with the intention of promoting public safety. The goals of the London Downtown CCTV program is to contribute to the safe environment of downtown, contribute to downtown revitalization, and to improve the ability of London Police and the City to respond to criminal and suspicious behaviour. The London Downtown CCTV program does not aim to replace/reduce London Police presence in monitored areas, but rather supplement their presence. Operators monitor live footage from the CCTV cameras and determine if police intervention is required. All information is retained for an approximately 72-hour period unless a record was requisitioned.<sup>5</sup> As of Summer 2023, the City may add an additional 40 security cameras to the existing 17 already in the downtown core area.<sup>6</sup>

Source(s): [1] [City of Detroit – Project Green Light Detroit](#); [2] [National Institute of Justice – Program Profile: Project Green Light](#); [3] [City of Brantford – Downtown Surveillance System: Project Update](#); [4] [City of London – Spotlight Program](#); [5] [City of London – London Downtown Closer Circuit Television \(CCTV\) Program Code of Practice](#); [6] [City of London – Core Area Action Plan 2022 Review](#)



# Downtown Patrols (1/3)

Downtown patrolling is a strategy that focuses on identifying specific geographic areas and increasing police, security, or municipal staff presence in those specific areas. The notion behind this concept is that concentrating resources in specific problem areas will allow for a greater reduction of crime and disorder. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

## INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Relationship Building** | Downtown patrol programs can allow municipalities and local authorities to build relationships within the community. Displaying an active presence downtown and conducting outreach activities such as regular visits to local businesses can enable relationships to be built and support residents and businesses in connecting to help when they need it.

**Increased Perception of Community Safety** | The primary goal of presence-based interventions like patrolling is to create a sense of safety for residents, local businesses, and visitors. Increasing feelings of safety downtown is essential to creating a greater sense of community well-being.

**Deterrence and Rapid Response** | Police, security, by-law officers, and municipal staff presence in a downtown core can deter potential offenders from engaging in activity that would otherwise create an unsafe environment. Knowing that there is active patrolling and monitoring of an area can discourage inappropriate activity; in addition, when incidences do occur, the proximity of responders allows for rapid responses and quick action.

## STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Ethical Considerations** | Depending on how the program is designed, over-policing, racial profiling, and erosion of community trust can occur from patrolling (e.g., hot spot policing tactics). It is essential that a municipality and all stakeholders involved implement such a presence-based program in a way that is fair, transparent, and respects civil liberties and constitutional rights.

**Sustainability** | Sustaining place-based intervention efforts can be challenging. While active patrolling can be effective at reducing crime in small, higher-risk locations, its longer-term sustainability and impact on crime levels across large areas requires further study.

**Financial Commitment** | Consistent patrolling of downtown requires dedicated financial and staffing resources to be successful. While this can be challenging for a municipality, these types of interventions may conversely allow local police departments and partner agencies to allocate their resources more efficiently by focusing on areas where crime is more likely to be concentrated.

## Downtown Patrols (2/3)

Various municipalities have introduced place-based interventions that use the physical presence of police, security, and municipal staff to deter and reduce crime and improve public safety. Outlined below are select examples from other municipalities:

### Core Patrol | City of Hamilton

Launched by the Hamilton Police, Core Patrol is a dedicated team of two officers who are assigned to downtown Hamilton and surrounding neighbourhoods to engage with business owners, residents, and other stakeholders. The Core Patrol is active from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday to coincide with increased pedestrian and road traffic. The Core Patrol officers are expected to refer vulnerable community members to appropriate health agencies, as well as a Rapid Intervention and Support Team. Officers also gather feedback and focus on the improvement of community safety and well-being by connecting folks to various resources.<sup>1</sup>

### Core Area Diversion Pilot Project | City of London

The Core Area Diversion Pilot Project aims to reduce the number of individual interactions between individuals experiencing homelessness and the London Police Service by connecting people experiencing homelessness with the City's Housing Stability System. Each week, Peer Outreach Workers with lived experience carry out 40 hours of outreach to connect people experiencing homelessness who have frequent interactions with the justice system to services and supports to meet their needs. The Peer Outreach Workers act as an inflow program to London's Housing Stability Program. The Core Area Diversion Pilot Project is a partnership between London Police and the City's Social and Health Development team. As of June 2022, the program team has reported a significant reduction in the interactions between individuals involved in the Diversion Pilot Project and London Police, as well as a significant decrease in target crimes in London's Core.<sup>2</sup>

### Edmonton Downtown Night Patrol | City of Edmonton

This initiative was launched by the Edmonton Downtown Business Association and is funded by the City of Edmonton's Downtown Vibrancy Fund. The initiative consists of two Night Patrol vehicles with a security professional and a peer support worker who will conduct patrols of downtown Edmonton between 12:30am to 8:30am. The Night Patrol team aims to conduct checks on business storefronts, buildings, and downtown public assets, de-escalate potentially dangerous situations, and collect, analyze and report metrics on property damage, break-ins, vandalism and other business-related incidents. Note: this program does not replace policing efforts of the Edmonton Police, and when needed, the Night Patrol team is required to call upon law enforcement.<sup>3</sup>

### Core Area Ambassador Program | City of London

Launched in 2021, this City-led program employs dedicated City staff to enrich the Core Area experience for residents, businesses, and visitors. City staff in bright green shirts walk the streets of the Core Area engaging with businesses, residents, and visitors from 7am to 11pm. Ambassadors routinely check-in with businesses to share updates from the City and to listen to questions or concerns they may have. The Ambassadors support events and programming, respond to questions, and improve the cleanliness of the area by picking up litter and notifying the City about larger cleanliness issues. Since its launch, the Core Area Ambassadors have logged over 5,000 interactions with residents, business owners, workers, and visitors and have participated in over 250 events and activations. The Ambassadors have also logged over 1,400 service requests related to vandalism, encampments, street side garbage, property damage, and construction concerns.<sup>4</sup>

Source(s): [1] [Hamilton Police Service – Hamilton Police Service Introduce Core Patrol in Downtown Hamilton](#); [2] [City of London – Diversion Pilot Project](#); [3] [Downtown Edmonton Business Association – EBDA's Night Patrol Officially Hits Downtown Streets](#); [4] [City of London – Core Area Ambassador Program](#)

## Downtown Patrols (3/3)

### Brantford Downtown Outreach Team (“BDOT”) | City of Brantford

Launched in 2019, BDOT is a partnership program between the City of Brantford, Brantford Police Services, St. Leonard’s Community Service, Grand River Community Health Centre, and the Downtown Brantford Business Improvement Area. BDOT aims to support vulnerable people in downtown Brantford and is made up of an Outreach Coordinator, a Nurse Practitioner, Concurrent Disorder Clinician, and a Peer Support Worker. BDOT is focused on providing outreach support to people who may be experiencing challenges with addictions, mental health, or housing, and connects them with the appropriate support services. This program started as a one-year pilot project in 2019 to address emerging challenges in downtown Brantford. The program was funded by the City’s portion of casino revenue, which is used to fund social programming and community projects.<sup>1</sup>

### Brantford Police Service Special Constable | City of Brantford

As of August 2022, Brantford Police Service’s Special Constables patrol the Downtown core of Brantford with a focus on addressing specific incidents or concerns as required. The Special Constables aim to proactively address issues in the downtown core by addressing issues that are outside of the purview of private security and by-law enforcement, but do not warrant the intervention of a police officer. This initiative aims to support the effective use of resources within the Brantford Police Service. Special Constables are authorized to address many offenses under the Criminal Code of Canada, *Mental Health Act* of Ontario, *Safe Streets Act* of Ontario, and offenses related to trespassing, liquor, and cannabis.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [City of Brantford – Brantford Downtown Outreach Team hits the ground running in city’s core](#); [2] [Brantford Police Services – BPS Special Constables on Downtown Patrol](#)

# Safer Public Spaces

**Some law enforcement agencies are increasingly adopting zero tolerance, safer public spaces approaches in their local communities. These measures are aimed at enforcing existing laws related to crime and open substance use and communicating that law enforcement will be actively involved in responding to incidences of crime. Outlined below are examples of recent measures used in two municipalities:**

## **Peterborough Police Service | City of Peterborough**

On October 5, 2023, the Peterborough Police Service announced a Safer Public Spaces approach. The police will now be taking a no tolerance approach regarding open air illicit drug use in the community.

Under the approach, if an officer sees open air illicit drug use or if police receive a call from a concerned resident, police will intervene and direct that person to stop and move to a different location. Those engaging in drug use will also be provided with information (if they choose to accept it) about addictions resources that are available in Peterborough. While acknowledging that addiction is an illness that requires support and compassion, the intent of the Safer Public Spaces approach is to promote the message that Peterborough Police are committed to safer public spaces for all residents, particularly parks, places of business, and those where children frequent.<sup>1</sup>

## **Edmonton Police Service | City of Edmonton**

On September 11, 2023, the Edmonton Police Service announced their own Safer Public Spaces approach, in which police will be taking action to address safety in public spaces with a more intensive focus on criminality and disorder associated with open-air drug use and drug trafficking. Annual crime statistics show that Edmonton's total crime rate has increased 8% between 2021 and 2022, with the violent crime rate increasing by 13% in the same period.

The intent of the approach is to provide compassionate interventions to ensure public spaces are safer for everyone, including addressing open-air drug use. The Edmonton Police Service is aiming to send a clear message that safety is the top priority, and to ensure that no residents feel their right to use public spaces is compromised. This includes supports for those who are victimized and links to treatment for those who are willing, with aggressive enforcement of those who are supplying and carrying out the illegal drug trade.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [Peterborough Police Service - Safer Public Spaces approach](#); [2] [Edmonton Police Service - Safer Public Spaces](#)

## By-Law Enforcement (1/2)

By-law enforcement in a downtown core can be beneficial to a municipality and the local community. By-law enforcement ultimately ensures by-law compliance which can contribute to the overall well-being, safety, and vitality in an area. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

### INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Public Safety and Community Standards** | Many by-laws are in place to support the safety of a community by upholding standards that ensure they are working and living in safe environments. This includes the enforcement of public health related by-laws such as food safety regulation and sanitation standards. The enforcement of by-laws helps prevent accidents and emergencies that could be harmful to a community and its visitors while upholding the values and priorities of a community.

**Tourism and Attraction** | By-law enforcement can enhance the appearance and feeling of safety in a city, ultimately attracting more visitors and tourists.

**Legal Compliance** | By-Law enforcement ensures that communities are abiding by the regulations created by local governments. Compliance of by-laws is required under law and ensures that individuals and businesses are adhering to the local rule of law that promotes community well-being.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Type of By-law Enforcement** | By-law enforcement in downtown can take many forms, including regular and consistent by-law monitoring and enforcement and “blitz” style concerted efforts to enforce a specific set of by-laws. By-law blitzes are often leveraged to address a specific issue and require a municipality to dedicate existing resources to specific by-law enforcement for a set period of time.

**Coordinated Approach** | By-law enforcement via initiatives such as a by-law “blitz” requires clear objectives as to the purpose of the blitz and require identification of which by-laws or regulations should be targeted during the effort.

## By-Law Enforcement (2/2)

Various municipalities have introduced interventions focused on by-law compliance and enforcement in an effort to reduce crime and improve public safety. Outlined below are select initiatives from other municipalities:

### Coordinated Informed Response (“CIR”) Program | City of London

CIR aims to offer a caring and compassionate approach to by-law enforcement specific to unhoused individuals living in encampments in London. CIR responds to calls of by-law infractions or safety issues pertaining to encampments. Once a call or complaint has been received or the CIR team sees a by-law or safety issue in real time, the team posts a Notice Order informing individuals residing in the encampment of a date (within 24 to 72 hours) that the site needs to be removed or by which the CIR will begin cleaning up. CIR will return on the notice date, clean up the site, and bag and store valuable items for 60 days, providing individuals with the opportunity to retrieve their belongings. The CIR team consists of trained staff from the City of London, London Police Services, and London CARES, a community outreach agency. CIR team members from London CARES conduct wellness checks on individuals living unhoused and work with them to support their attainment of safe alternative housing.<sup>1</sup>

### Body Worn Cameras Pilot Project | City of Guelph

In 2022, Guelph’s Corporate and Community Safety Division launched a pilot program where By-law Compliance Officers were outfitted with Body Worn Cameras (“BWC”). The aim of this project is to collect digital proof that may be needed in court for prosecutions and share agency evidence with the Guelph Police Service. One year after the pilot began, the City found the BWCs to be helpful in resolving issues without using the court system, dealing with public complaints, and for officer training purposes. The City has advised Council to expand the program beyond the one-year pilot period.<sup>3</sup>

### Proactive Compliance Program | City of London

The City of London’s Proactive Compliance Program is a City-led safety and security program that has added two dedicated Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (“MLEO”) as of May 2021. This program proactively monitors by-law compliance in the Core Action Area of downtown London. MLEOs aim to proactively address by-law matters through education and voluntary compliance. By Q4 of 2023, the MLEOs are expected to have completed a three-week core area by-law enforcement blitz whereby existing resources will be implemented to identify by-law infractions, working with property and business owners to address the infractions, and enforcing by-laws accordingly. The blitz aims to both ensure that businesses and property owners are in by-law compliance and establish an understanding that the City will enforce its by-laws.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [City of London – Coordinated Informed Response](#); [2] [City of London – Core Area Action Plan](#); [3] [City of Guelph – Information Report: Body Worn Cameras](#)

# Crisis Support (1/2)

Crisis support programs in downtown are critical for a healthy and safe downtown. They address the unique needs of vulnerable communities who often reside in downtown cores. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

## INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Rapid Response** | Crisis support interventions can provide immediate help to those experiencing mental health and/or substance use crises, preventing further escalation. These interventions can reduce the harm associated with mental health and/or substance use by preventing overdoses, self-harm, or accidents that may involve others.

**Connect People in Crisis with Appropriate Services** | Crisis response programs can connect people in need of support with appropriate essential services and programming, promoting community well-being and safety. They may also ease the burden placed on emergency services such as police services which may not be adequately equipped to navigate mental health and/or addiction crises.

**Data Collection** | Crisis support programs can collect data on a community's need for social support programs. This data is valuable to municipalities as it allows for a fulsome understanding of local needs and allows them to make decisions regarding program development and resource allocation.

## STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Leveraging Partnerships** | In order to deliver adequate crisis response programs, partnerships with specialized community organizations / groups should be leveraged. Using a partnership model in program delivery ensures that people receive appropriate and specialized care. Specialized community organizations generally have the infrastructure in place to provide care and assistance to vulnerable community members. Establishing and leveraging these partnerships can ensure that resources are used appropriately and prevents duplication of efforts.

**Multi-Modal Programing** | Crisis support programming in downtown cores can take many different forms. Depending on community needs, programming can look like mobile response services, hotlines, text support, and in-person walk-in services. Through partnership, municipalities can establish multiple streams of support for crisis intervention that best align with the communities they serve.

**Sustainable Funding** | In order to activate and maintain crisis support programming in a downtown core, there is a need for sustainable funding that allows crisis support programs to consistently serve their communities and have a longer-term impact.



## Crisis Support (2/2)

**In partnership with community organizations, various municipalities have introduced programs that support people with lived experience and those actively experiencing mental health and /or addictions crises. Outlined below are select partnership initiatives:**

### **Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Street (“CAHOOTS”) | Eugene, Oregon**

Funded through the Eugene Police Department (“EPD”), CAHOOTS is a 24-hour, 7-day a week mobile crisis intervention program that supports the EPD and Eugene Springfield Fire by responding to many of the social service calls received by the 911 system or the non-emergency line. CAHOOTS is dispatched through EPD’s service channel and responds to a variety of calls, diverting calls away from police or fire, and handling calls that normally would not be responded to by law enforcement. Each CAHOOTS van is staffed with a medic (nurse or emergency medical technician) and an experienced crisis worker. CAHOOTS personnel provide initial contact and transportation for people who are intoxicated, mentally ill, or disoriented, as well as transportation for necessary non-emergency medical care. Some calls responded to by CAHOOTS are joint responses or at times, CAHOOTS is called to join a police or fire call in progress if it is determined that their services are better suited to address the situation.<sup>1</sup>

In 2021, CAHOOTS was dispatched and arrived at 16,479 calls for service, a 70.8% increase from 2014 when CAHOOTS was dispatched for and arrived at 9,646 calls. The CAHOOTS program diverts 3-8% of calls for police.<sup>1</sup> The most common nature of CAHOOTS calls include assisting police – 36% of CAHOOTS total call volume includes assisting police by responding to non-emergency service requests including counseling. Another 35% of the total call volume are for welfare checks, and 11% are for transportation which generally involves moving a person, often unhoused or dealing with a mental health and / or addictions issue, for non-emergency services.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [Eugene Police Department – CAHOOTS](#); [2] [Eugene Police Department – CAHOOTS Program Analysis 2021 Update](#); [3] [CMHA Halton – Our Programs and Services](#); [4] [ADAPT – Community Justice](#)

### **Safe Beds, Congregate Treatment Setting | Halton Region**

The Safe Beds Program is a 24/7 community-based residential service that aims to provide short-term residential beds for folks aged 16 and above who are experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis and are in immediate contact with the Halton Region Police Service (“HRPS”). Referrals for this program are made by HRPS and admission into the program is based on screening conducted by Safe Beds program staff.<sup>3</sup>

The Safe Beds Program leverages a person-centred approach to help people stabilize while experiencing a crisis and connect them with services and supports to address their longer-term health and well-being.

This program is delivered in collaboration between HRPS, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Supportive Housing Halton, and Halton Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Assessment Prevention & Treatment Services (ADAPT).<sup>4</sup>



## Accessible Community Spaces / Facilities (1/2)

Accessible community spaces and facilities provide community members with safe and welcoming places to access services, engage in community building, and seek various supports. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

### INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Safety and Shelter** | Accessible community spaces / facilities offer a safe and protected environment for vulnerable community members to seek shelter from crime, exploitation, and harsh living conditions. Furthermore, they provide a place for vulnerable community members to spend their time where they are treated with dignity and respect.

**Increased Access to Services** | Through accessible community spaces, vulnerable community members can obtain information and referrals for social services that would fit their unique needs.

**Improve community safety and well-being** | By providing safe spaces downtown, a municipality can reduce incidences of loitering, pan handling, public intoxication, and public urination that would otherwise deter visitors and social activity in specific areas of downtown. Providing people with a low-barrier, positive, and welcoming place to spend their time can encourage health and wellness and reduce disruptive behaviour.

**Data Collection** | Accessible spaces that are staffed appropriately can provide a municipality and partner organizations with valuable data regarding the needs of vulnerable communities. This data can inform decision-making and ultimately lead to more effective programming.

### STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Creating Low Barrier Spaces** | To ensure that community spaces / facilities are accessible and welcoming to vulnerable communities, the location and barriers to access must be carefully considered. There is a need to ensure that these spaces can be easily accessed without undue barriers that would hinder their usage, while also integrating well with the local community. Co-designing spaces and facilities alongside individuals with lived and living experience and those who support them (e.g., social service providers, family members, friends) can be a highly effective tool to increase the uptake of space / facility usage.

## Accessible Community Spaces / Facilities (2/2)

Through partnerships, municipalities across the country have introduced community programming aimed to support vulnerable community members downtown. Outlined below are select partnership initiatives:

### Multi-Agency Community Space | City of Cambridge

Located in downtown Cambridge, the Multi-Agency Community Space welcomes the City's unhoused population to access basic needs such as food, healthcare, and harm reduction supplies. The drop-in hub is located within the Region of Waterloo's building in Cambridge with regional councilors having agreed to rent the space for \$1 per year for two years, starting in 2021. The drop-in space addresses gaps in accessibility of emergency shelters by providing safe and accessible services. The drop-in program is operated by AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and area.<sup>1</sup>

### Downtown Washroom Attendant Pilot Project | City of Calgary

Launched in May 2023, the City of Calgary has operated the Downtown Washroom Attendant Pilot Project at two downtown parks with the aim of improving the safety, cleanliness, accessibility, and overall user experience of public washrooms. The City of Calgary partnered with the Alberta Alliance Who Educate and Advocate Responsibly to hire washroom attendants who would otherwise face barriers when seeking employment. Washroom attendants may be people who have lived experience of mental health and / or addictions challenges or homelessness. As part of the program, washroom attendants are responsible for custodial services of the public facility, monitoring the public washroom, and where appropriate, sharing information regarding community resources. This pilot initiative was funded in part by the Government of Alberta and project outcomes are currently being evaluated by the City.<sup>3</sup>

### Health & Homelessness System Response | City of London

The City of London has approved funding for three local organizations, Atlohsa Family Healing Services, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, and CMHA to operate the first of several hubs that aim to service the City's unhoused community. The City of London's hubs aim to offer unhoused communities with a 24/7 safe place that helps them meet their basic needs, provides opportunities for community engagement, access to housing, income, and health care supports, respite beds, transitional beds, medical stabilization beds, and many more.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [Regional Municipality of Waterloo – Committee of the Whole Addendum Agenda](#); [2] [City of London – Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee Report](#); [3] [City of Calgary – Downtown Washroom Attendant Pilot Project](#).

# Downtown Vibrancy (1/3)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (“CPTED”) principles provide cities with strategies to make the physical environment in their communities more livable and vibrant. Leveraging vibrancy initiatives informed by CPTED principles can enhance the feeling of safety and security for residents and people working and visiting downtown cores through changes and improvements to the built environment. The theory is that physical improvements in the built environment can lead to a reduction in incidents of crime and improve feelings of safety in a neighbourhood. Outlined below is information about such interventions and strategic considerations for the City of Windsor:

## INTERVENTION BENEFITS

**Safety and Security** | A vibrant downtown with increased pedestrian traffic and social activity increases feelings and perceptions of safety and security. A well lit, active, and attractive downtown with more people present can instill a sense of safety that can deter crime.

**Social and Cultural Hub** | A vibrant downtown attracts social and cultural activity and can be a place for creative events that reflect the local community and attract visitors and tourists.

**Economic Prosperity** | Ultimately, a vibrant downtown attracts economic investment that further increases local economic prosperity. The physical attractiveness of a space attracts public and private investment that can lead to improvements in public infrastructure, transit, and beautification projects which can further increase the appeal of downtown.

## STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

**Clear Vision and Community Alignment** | In order to develop and implement successful vibrancy initiatives, a municipality must have a clear vision for what it wants its downtown to be. A vision aligns all stakeholders and allows for programming and initiatives to be developed that ultimately lead to the same outcome of increasing downtown vibrancy.

**Collaborating with the Community** | Vibrancy efforts must align with the needs and preferences of the communities they serve. Municipalities must consistently monitor the outcomes of their vibrancy efforts and be willing to adapt strategies based on feedback received from the community. Collaboration with the local community is essential as it builds buy-in for change and ensures that communities have a sense of ownership of their downtown and are interested in maintaining the introduced changes.

**Sustainable Funding** | Vibrancy efforts can be costly and often require secure funding. Funding of such initiatives can take the form of grants, loans, tax incentives, and even private investment. Municipalities must consider what funding model(s) is most appropriate for their goals with consideration for the cost to maintain such vibrancy efforts.

## Downtown Vibrancy Initiatives (2/3)

Various municipalities have introduced vibrancy initiatives that focus on making downtown an attractive place to live, work, and enjoy. Initiatives range from municipally-led strategies focused on vibrancy to one-off projects where vibrancy is an output. Outlined below are select initiatives from other municipalities:

### Downtown Vibrancy Strategy | City of Edmonton

The Downtown Edmonton Vibrancy Strategy is a two-year call to action which consists of a series of 18 short-term actions that aim to improve the vibrancy of downtown Edmonton over the longer-term. Edmonton’s vibrancy pillars are: Downtown as a Home; Downtown as an Economic Hub; Downtown as a Destination; and Downtown as a Safe, Welcoming Place. The Strategy relies on strategic partnership to enable coordinated responses from government, industry, agencies, business owners, property owners, and residents of Edmonton. The City anticipates that total implementation of the actions in the strategy will cost between \$7 million to over \$28 million depending on scale of implementation.

As part of the Downtown Edmonton Vibrancy Strategy, the City has launched grant programs to enable vibrancy initiatives. The Downtown Vibrancy Fund has awarded more than \$65.5 million in funding since 2021 to 61 projects within or having a direct impact on downtown Edmonton. Projects that are eligible for funding under the Downtown Vibrancy Fund include projects that focus on decreasing residential vacancy, promoting businesses and events, increasing economic activity, developing local tourism infrastructure, and improving the safety and beautification of downtown Edmonton. Similarly, the Meet Me Downtown Grant provides up to \$10,000 to businesses and organizations to host events, festivals, and activities to attract people to downtown Edmonton.<sup>1</sup>

Source(s): [1] [City of Edmonton – Downtown Vibrancy Strategy](#); [2] [City of London – Downtown Kitchener Vision and Principles](#); [3] [City of Kitchener – Downtown Kitchener Vision and Principles – Phase Two Engagement Summary](#)

### Downtown Kitchener Vision and Principles | City of Kitchener

In October 2023, the City of Kitchener Downtown Community Working Group (“DCWG”) presented the Downtown Kitchener Vision and Principles to City Council. The vision and principles identified by the DCWG will guide the development of an action plan for Downtown Kitchener and will inform new and ongoing City initiatives that are about or include the downtown. DCWG conducted comprehensive community engagement to identify the key issues within downtown Kitchener and ultimately developed a vision of “*Downtown Kitchener. The heart of the city that excites, supports, and unites*”. The three guiding principles for downtown Kitchener are:

- *First Guiding Principle – Radiating Vibrancy;*
- *Second Guiding Principle – Cultivating Connection;* and
- *Third Guiding Principle – Belonging.*

It is anticipated that current and future initiatives may include a land use and zoning framework for the Major Transit Station Areas, Civic District Master Plan, District Energy, Bramms Yards Master Plan, Arts and Culture Strategic Plan, Inclusionary Zoning, Places and Spaces, Comprehensive Review of City-owned Properties, and a new or updated Official Plan.<sup>2,3</sup>

## Downtown Vibrancy Initiatives (3/3)

### Downtown Façade & Safety Improvement Grant | City of Brantford

This proposed grant program is designed to provide a financial incentive for downtown property owners to complete façade and safety improvements to their properties. This program is proposed to be delivered within the confines of Brantford’s existing Community Improvement Project Area in the downtown with the objective of assisting property owners in defining spaces, encouraging activity, and increasing safety. Eligible projects under this grant program include but are not limited to building façade enhancements, bike storage areas, enhanced lighting, anti-graffiti product installation, and commissioned murals.<sup>1</sup>

### Property Tax Increment-Based Grant via the Downtown Community Improvement Plan | City of Brantford

To increase the supply and mix of residential units in Downtown Brantford, the City has introduced the Downtown Community Improvement Plan (“CIP”) to support the vision for a Downtown Urban Growth Centre that consists of a range of built forms and land uses to create a sustainable and complete community. The primary goal of the CIP is to facilitate the transformation of existing properties into intensified residential and mixed-use developments.

To promote large scale redevelopment programs, Brantford has introduced the Property Tax Increment-Based Grant program under the Downtown CIP. This program aims to provide a grant equivalent to up to a percentage of the increase in municipal property taxes. The percentage amount varies based on whether the project is a revitalization project or an affordable housing project.<sup>2</sup>

Source(s): [1] [City of Brantford – Proposed Downtown Façade & Safety Improvement Grant Program](#); [2] [City of Brantford – Downtown Community Improvement Plan](#); [3] [City of Calgary – Downtown Development Incentive Programs](#); [4] [City of London – Core Area Loans and Grants](#)

### Downtown Development Incentive Program | City of Calgary

With an initial investment of \$45 million, the purpose of this program is to provide financial incentives to assist with the removal of six million square feet of office space in the Greater Downtown Plan Area by converting vacant office space into residential or other adaptive uses. The incentive program offers \$75 per square foot with a maximum of \$10 million per property. The program is designed to support the revitalization of Calgary’s downtown core by encouraging the conversion of under-utilized office space into spaces that can be used for residential units, post-secondary institutions, and other spaces that are beneficial for the community. This program aligns with Calgary’s goal of creating a vibrant downtown core that has space for a greater diversity of activities.<sup>3</sup>

### Core Area Loans and Grants | City of London

Through the City of London’s Core Area Community Improvement Plan, loans and grants are available to businesses and property owners in the downtown and Old East Village Community Improvement Plan areas. These loans and grants are intended to improve vibrancy in the downtown core by improving the appearance, safety, and functionality of existing spaces. These programs include two 10-year 0% interest loans: the Façade Improvement Loan and the Upgrade to Building Code Loan. The City also provides five grants: the Core Area Safety Audit Grant; Core Area Boulevard Café Grant; Core Area Sign Grant; Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Tax Grant; and the Residential Development Charges Grant.<sup>4</sup>

## Featured Comparator | London, Ontario

The City of London is in the process of revitalizing its downtown core and navigating through the challenges associated with growth (e.g., affordable housing, increased demand for services). Like Windsor, London has historically been a center of manufacturing and industry including food products, brass and steel products, and electrical appliances, among others. Like Windsor, London is also home to a large university and college that drives in-migration.

### Notable Programs and Initiatives

In 2019, London launched its [Core Area Action Plan](#) (“CAAP”) to improve public safety in the downtown area. The CAAP outlines 69 short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives focused on improving homelessness prevention, enhancing safety and security, growing the economy, and creating a positive space for visitors.

Notable short-term (within 6 months) initiatives included:

- Strengthening delivery of the **Coordinated Informed Response Program** to compassionately work with individuals to find safe locations for them to focus on their needs to maintain housing stability.
- Establishing a **Headlease Program** whereby the City/partner agencies sign a lease to secure housing for a participant.
- **Doubling foot patrol officers** in the Core Area for a discrete period of time.
- Staging police command vehicles in strategic locations.
- Creating a **“Spotlight Program”** to raise the visibility and awareness of security cameras in the downtown core.
- Conducting a three-week **Core Area by-law enforcement blitz**.
- Enhancing the Service London Portal to allow for complaints, concerns, and enquiries on Core Area issues.
- Exploring new ways to support property owners to dispose of used needles.
- Providing incentives for uplighting on privately-owned buildings.

## Featured Comparator | Brantford, Ontario

**With a vision for a vibrant downtown, Brantford has focused on revitalizing its core over the past several years by introducing transformative changes to build a prosperous business, educational, and cultural hub. Over the past two decades, Brantford has been a moderate-growth (12.8% over 10-year) growth rate municipality.**

### Notable Programs and Initiatives

In April 2022, Brantford City Council approved the Brantford Downtown Priority Plan to ensure that downtown Brantford is safe, vibrant, and welcoming for residents and visitors. With public input, the Downtown Priority Plan identified 3 Focus Areas and 18 Key Priorities which consist of a mix of short- and long-term action items. Brantford's key priority areas include Safety and Security, Inclusion and Support, and Growth and Vibrancy.

Notable short- and longer-term actions include:

- Increasing patrolling downtown;
- Increasing awareness, availability, and coordination of social supports and housing services available in downtown, including safe, public, and accessible washroom facilities.
- Exploring options to further develop and offer grants and incentive programs;
- Improving the cleanliness and image of downtown;
- Exploring parking and transit solutions to support the vibrancy and economic growth of downtown.

As of October 2023, the [Downtown Priority Plan's](#) accomplishments include, but are not limited to, the launch of a Downtown Mobile Security Team, the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, approval for the redevelopment of select parcels of land, installation of traffic safety measures at key locations, installation of CCTV cameras, increased video surveillance, maintenance, and security at the Downtown Parkade, completion of a pedestrian path, upgrades to sidewalks and roads in downtown, and research on public perceptions of safety downtown.

Additionally, in 2023 the City introduced the [Brantford-Brant Community Drug Strategy Action Plan](#) to address the ongoing substance use challenges in the region. Through the Drugs Strategy Coordinating Committee and its affiliated working groups, 14 initiatives were recognized to support the City of Brantford and County of Brant in actualizing the recommendations of the Brantford-Brant's original Drugs Strategy. The Drug Strategy Action Plan includes measures such as piloting fentanyl test strip distribution in Brantford-Brant, opening a Consumption and Treatment Services ("CTS") site in Brantford, launching a drug treatment court in Brantford-Brant, and raising the profile of the Drugs Strategy.





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