

## **BRANTFORD'S DOWNTOWN PRIORITY PLAN**

**A Community Vision for the City Centre**



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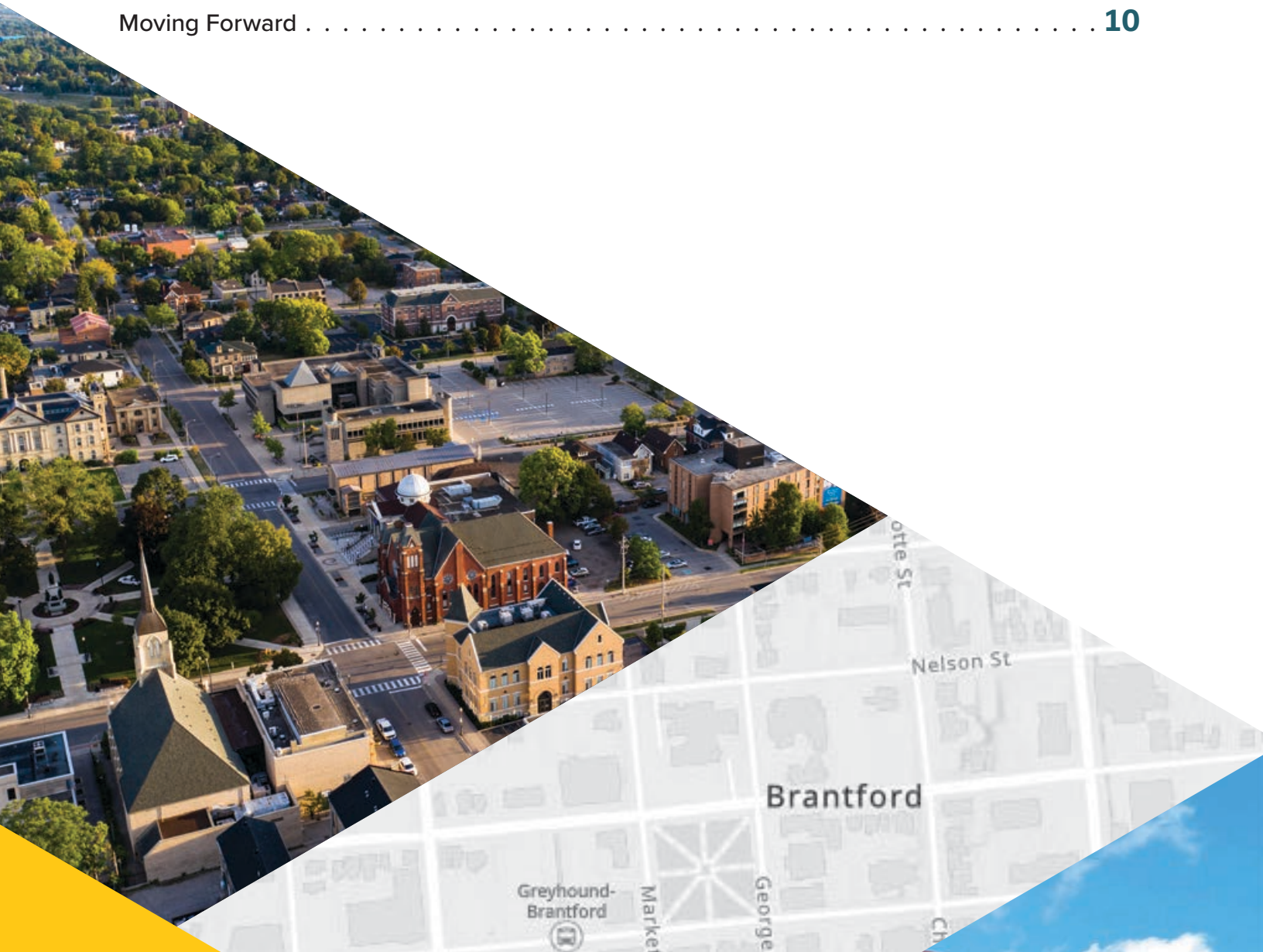
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# GREETINGS

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Brantford's downtown is a vibrant hub of business, education, heritage and public spaces, welcoming thousands of visitors, residents and students each year.

Our downtown presents exciting opportunities and difficult challenges, and the community must work together to ensure that everyone has a positive and welcoming experience in the heart of our City.

The Downtown Brantford Priority Plan will guide our collective work, and deliver on the shared vision of a downtown that is safe, inclusive and prosperous.

On behalf of City Council, I want to sincerely thank the individuals, organizations and businesses that contributed their ideas and creativity to this Priority Plan, and we look forward to supporting this exciting work in the years ahead.



Mayor Kevin Davis  
Chair, Downtown Brantford Improvement Task Force



# CONTINUING OUR JOURNEY

Over the past two decades, Brantford's downtown has undergone transformative change into a prosperous hub of education, business and culture. As seen below, this change has been made possible by the innovation and investment of multiple stakeholders, all with the shared vision of a vibrant downtown.

## Milestones and Investments

- **1999** Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) opens Brantford Campus
- **2008** Official opening of Harmony Square
- **2009** Lucy Marco / Heritage House opens (joint City – WLU residential / student building)
- **2009** Incentive Programs Launched [Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program(BFTIP) and Development Charges Credit]
- **2010** Colborne Street South Revitalization Project
- **2012** Conestoga College opens Brantford Campus
- **2013** Expositor Place Residence complete (WLU)
- **2013** Official opening of *Prominence Point*
- **2014** WLU purchases One Market Square
- **2016** Launch of Brantford GO Bus Service
- **2017** Downtown Public Library Façade Refresh
- **2017** *La Landscape de Kanata* Public Art Project at BPL Main Branch
- **2018** Official Opening of WLU/ YMCA Athletics and Recreation Complex
- **2018** Provincial Funding received for Main Street Revitalization (additional planters, bike racks, benches and waste disposal bins)
- **2018** Launch of the City-WLU CityStudio Program
- **2019** Launch of Rapid Access Addictions Medicine (RAAM) Clinic
- **2019** Renovations commence at One Market Square
- **2019** Launch of Brantford Downtown Outreach Team
- **2019** Centennial anniversary of Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts
- **2019** Construction begins on One Wellington Street (140 units)
- **2019** Launch of *Brantford's Grand Exhibit* Public Art Project





- **2020** Market Street Walkway lighting upgrades
- **2020** Increased COVID-related support for vulnerable persons (hygiene stations, shelter beds)
- **2020** Launch of the Encampment Network Response Protocol
- **2020** Downtown Traffic Boxes (4) wrapped with historical imagery (anti-graffiti measure )
- **2020** Launch of Colborne Point Gateway Project
- **2020** Launch of Temporary Patio Program
- **2020** City initiates Environmental Assessment for Downtown (infrastructure, aesthetics, safety)
- **2020** Launch of the Mayors' Housing Partnership Action Plan
- **2020** Increased parkade security and lighting features
- **2020** Launch of the Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force Action Plan
- **2020** Launch of Library Outreach Worker Program (joint City – BPL initiative)
- **2021** Re-opening of Brant's Crossing Bridge
- **2021** Lighting upgrades at Harmony Square
- **2021** Installation of garbage compactors as part of Clean Brantford Initiative
- **2021** Launch of the Mobile Medical Van Program (joint GRCHC – St. Leonard's initiative)
- **2021** Launch of City-wide Graffiti Mitigation Program
- **2021** Construction begins on 7 Erie Avenue (96 units)

- **2021** Official opening of Brantford's New City Hall
- **2021** Completion of Sanderson Centre new marquee
- **2021** Rainbow crosswalk installed on Colborne Street to support LGBTQ2S+ community
- **2021** Launch of the Downtown Mobile Security Team
- **2021** Relocated Crystal Cottage (Heritage designated structure)
- **2021** *Guardians and Guides* City Hall Public Art Project
- **2021** Launch of Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP)
- **2022** Additional Special Constables approved for the downtown
- **2022** Harmony Square flag pole installation
- **2022** Research-based Memorandum of Understanding between City and WLU
- **2022** Walter Gretzky bust unveiled at New City Hall



# DOWNTOWN BRANTFORD IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE

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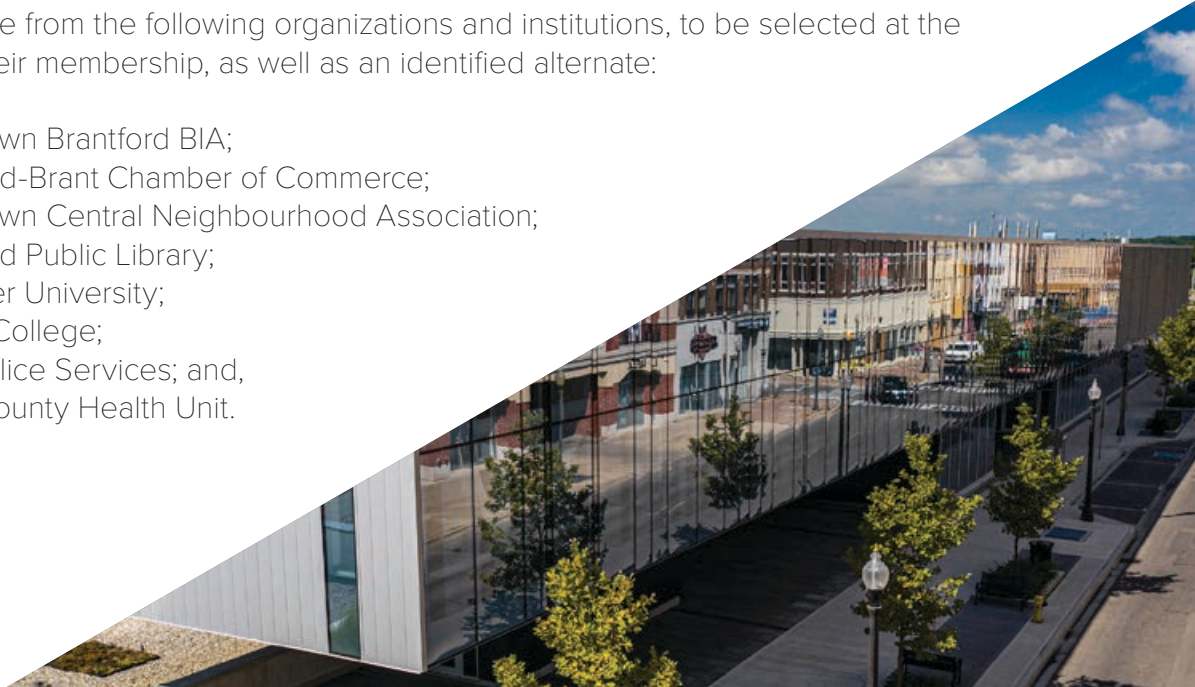
Like the Urban Core of most cities, social challenges exist alongside the positive change and growth that Brantford's downtown is experiencing.

Municipalities have an important role in bringing experts together, creating meaningful public engagement and advocating for needed resources.

The Downtown Brantford Improvement Task Force is the next step in this collective journey, and serves as a call-to-action for leaders within the business, education, government and non-profit sectors for continued collaboration and creativity to ensure that the downtown is safe, vibrant and welcoming to for residents, students and visitors.

## Task Force Composition

- City of Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis.
- The following members of Brantford City Council:
  - » Councillor McCreary;
  - » Councillor Utley;
  - » Councillor Van Tilborg;
  - » Councillor Vanderstelt; and,
  - » Councillor Wall.
- The Brantford-Brant Member of Provincial Parliament, or their designate.
- The Brantford-Brant Member of Parliament, or their designate.
- A representative from the following organizations and institutions, to be selected at the discretion of their membership, as well as an identified alternate:
  - » The Downtown Brantford BIA;
  - » The Brantford-Brant Chamber of Commerce;
  - » The Downtown Central Neighbourhood Association;
  - » The Brantford Public Library;
  - » Wilfrid Laurier University;
  - » Conestoga College;
  - » Brantford Police Services; and,
  - » The Brant County Health Unit.

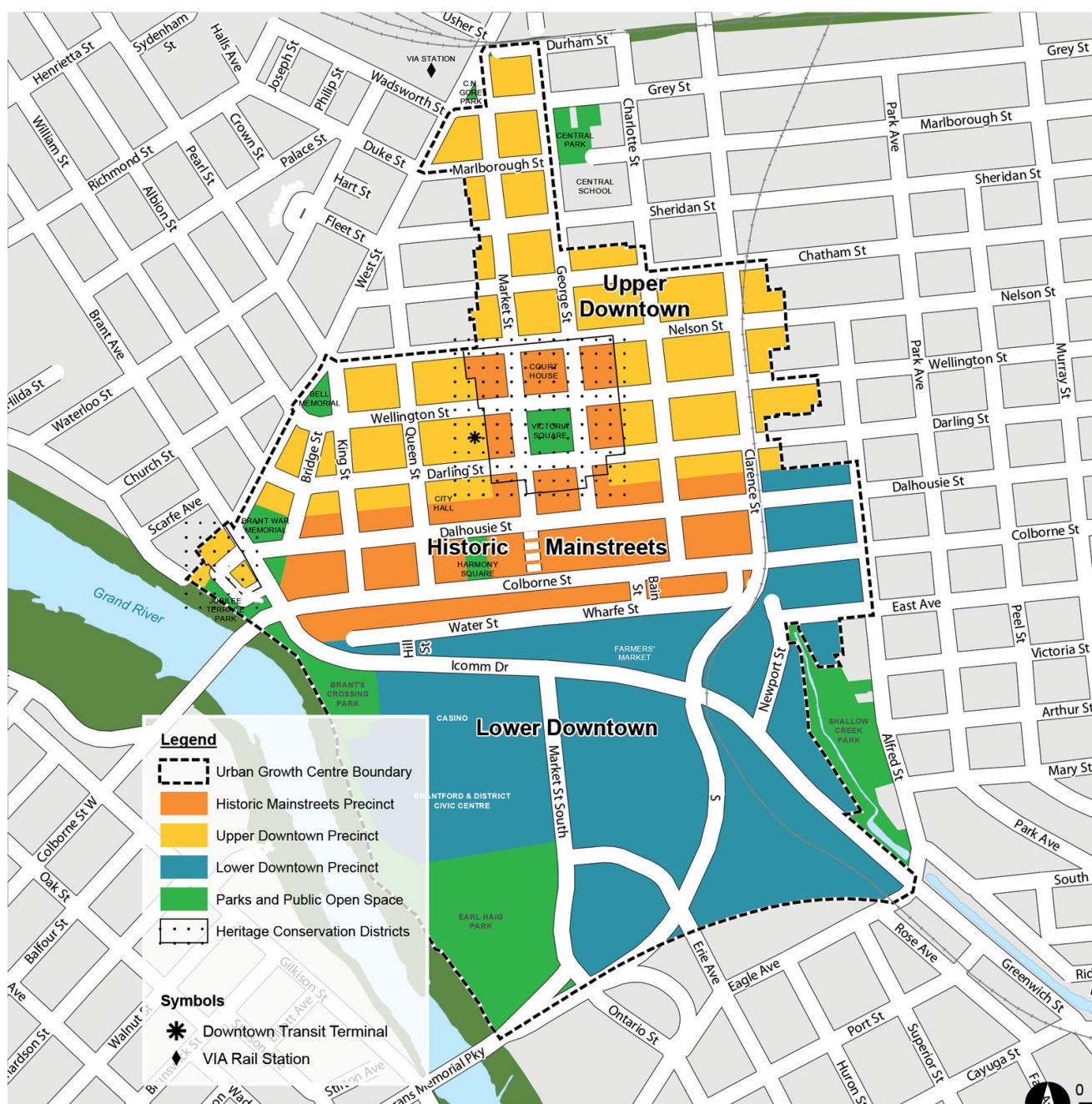


## Defining the Downtown

Currently the boundaries of Downtown Brantford are defined by the streets encompassed within the Downtown Urban Growth Centre. Although the map below represents the area of direct focus, some priorities may extend beyond these geographical boundaries.

## Map: Downtown Brantford

The following map showcases Brantford's downtown with streets, boundaries, precincts, heritage districts, and transit centres.





# DEFINING OUR PRIORITIES

## Downtown Brantford Public Consultation Campaign

The objective of the public consultation campaign was to ensure the community and key stakeholders could participate in a series of meaningful engagement opportunities to help inform the Priorities Plan.

**“This Action Plan has demonstrated the community’s remarkable ability and commitment to improve everyday experiences in our downtown community, making it a better place to live, visit and conduct business.”**

BARBARA SUTHERLAND, CHAIR, DOWNTOWN BRANTFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

Public feedback was collected through a series of public and stakeholder engagement opportunities conducted in October and November 2021 including:

- Online public engagement through *Let’s Talk Brantford*;
- A month-long social media campaign on City’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms;
- Two public virtual town halls on October 19, 2021;
- Stakeholder engagement session with Community Supports Working Group members;
- Stakeholder engagement session with Economic and Cultural Vitality Working Group members;
- Stakeholder engagement session with Safety and Security Working Group members; and,
- People with Lived Experience survey.

The focused efforts of the Task Force Working Groups, combined with public input, resulted in the identification of 3 Focus Areas and 18 Key Priorities, representing a mix of short and long terms actions, with many currently underway.







# KEY PRIORITIES

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## Safety and Security

- Increase the presence of special constables downtown;
- Increase the presence of security officers downtown;
- Train police officers to conduct audits and make recommendations based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles;
- Explore the feasibility of additional safety initiatives in the downtown (i.e. CCTV Cameras, Safe Walk, lighting improvements, CPTED incentive program);
- Advocate to upper levels of government for bail reform, increased judicial resources and other needed supports; and,
- Explore the feasibility of additional traffic safety measures downtown.



## Inclusion and Support

- Ongoing, transparent and authentic engagement with Indigenous stakeholders to inform and co-create appropriate responses to local issues;
- Increase awareness, availability and coordination of social supports and housing services available in the downtown including safe, public and accessible washroom facilities;
- Explore projects to reduce stigma and encourage inclusivity in the downtown;
- Leverage community partnerships to make the downtown a supportive and welcoming environment for post-secondary students; and,
- Explore the feasibility of a community research hub downtown and enhanced data sharing among social service providers.



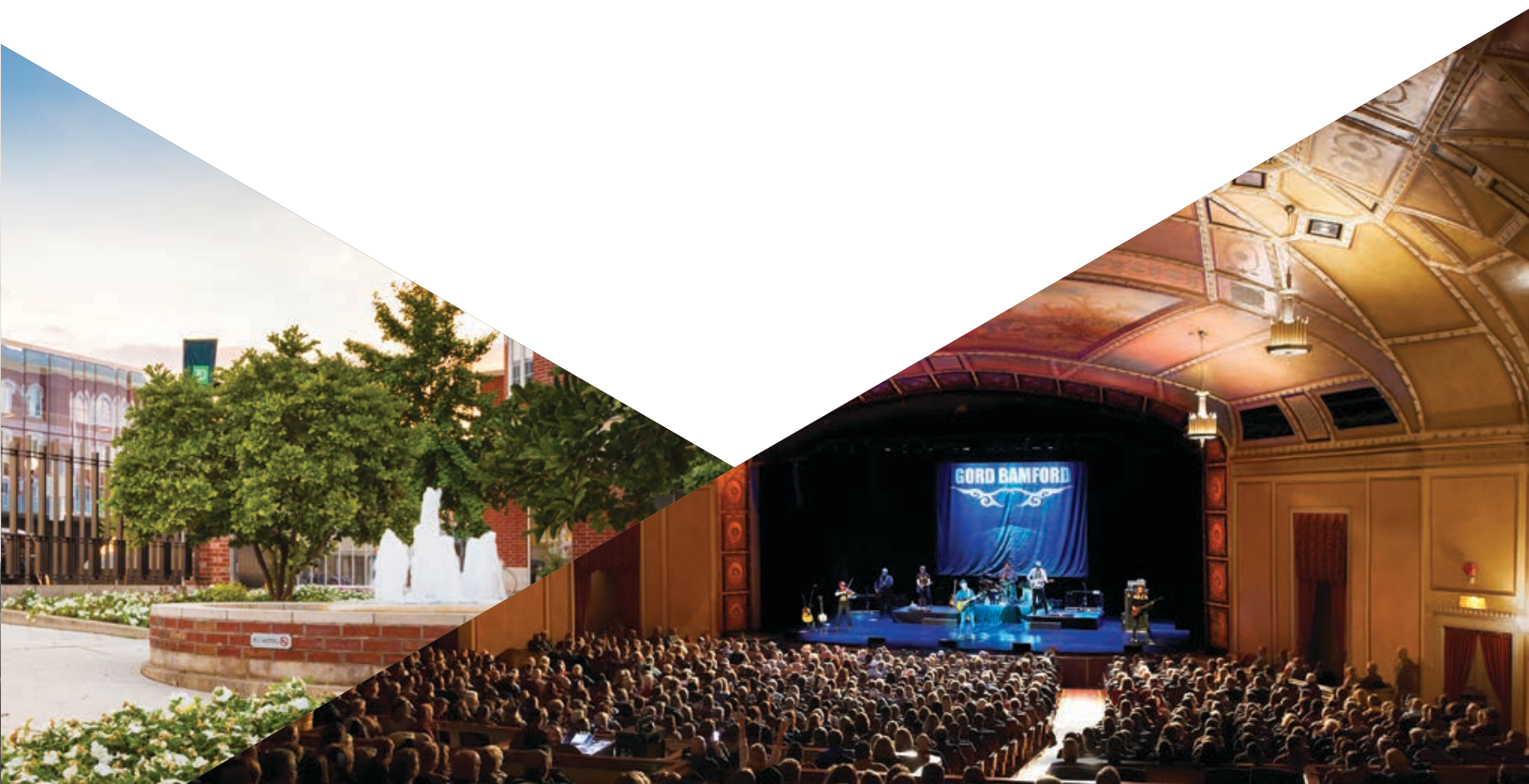


## Growth and Vibrancy

- Continue to support residential and business development downtown and the growth of post-secondary educational institutions;
- Develop a unified approach to marketing, promotion and grant writing among downtown stakeholders and explore the options of developing further grant and incentive programs;
- Leverage the community's historical and cultural heritage when planning events and programs in the downtown;
- Explore the feasibility of a cultural hub downtown;
- Improve the cleanliness and image of downtown;
- Promote downtown as a unique event and program venue and continue to develop linkages to the waterfront and Mohawk-Greenwich District; and,
- Explore parking and transit solutions that support the vibrancy and economic growth of the downtown.

**“It’s imperative for the success and well-being of local residents, businesses and students that we work together to foster a community experience that is safe, vibrant and welcoming for all.”**

HEIDI NORTHWOOD, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER, WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY – BRANTFORD CAMPUS



# MOVING FORWARD

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## Early Successes

Community planning can be a lengthy process, often taking years to produce noticeable results. Although many of these priorities are long-term, the Downtown Brantford Improvement Task Force has been a catalyst for immediate actions and investment, including:

- Increase of Special Constables Downtown;
- Development of a permanent Mobile Security Team;
- Streamlining the development approvals process (technology, response time, organizational alignment);
- Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Brantford and WLU for collaborative research;
- Advocacy regarding bail reform and additional judicial resources; and,
- Increased coordination of social supports and encampment response.

In addition, significant progress is being made on projects to support the long-term growth, appearance and economic potential of the downtown and surrounding districts. These projects include streetscaping, active transportation options, improved trails, infrastructure, traffic calming measures, graffiti removal, lighting enhancements and more.

Additional success drivers include the ongoing expansion of post-secondary education, a review of emergency shelter and homelessness outreach services, the return of events and festivals to the downtown post-COVID, and the re-visioning of One Market Square as an education and cultural hub.

Private sector development will also be an important catalyst for investment and improved economic outcomes, with over 1700 residential units currently in the approval planning process. These projects will also contribute significant commercial space and business opportunities within the City Centre.

These revitalization efforts will complement the ongoing development on the waterfront and Mohawk-Greenwich Districts, positioning the downtown as a corridor of business, events, culture and learning, unique in the Province, and filled with potential.





## Celebrate and Collaborate

The development of the Downtown Brantford Priority Plan serves as a challenge to all downtown stakeholders to use its available resources, capital investment, program development and partnerships in support of this common vision.

Maintaining the momentum of this Priority Plan is critical to long-term success. Beginning in Spring 2023, the City will host an annual *Let's Go Downtown* celebration event, bringing together Task Force Members and the community to provide updates regarding the Downtown Brantford Priority Plan, discuss emerging challenges and develop solutions. During the interim, stakeholders will continue to research and establish appropriate next steps for ideas brought forward through the public consultation and working group process.

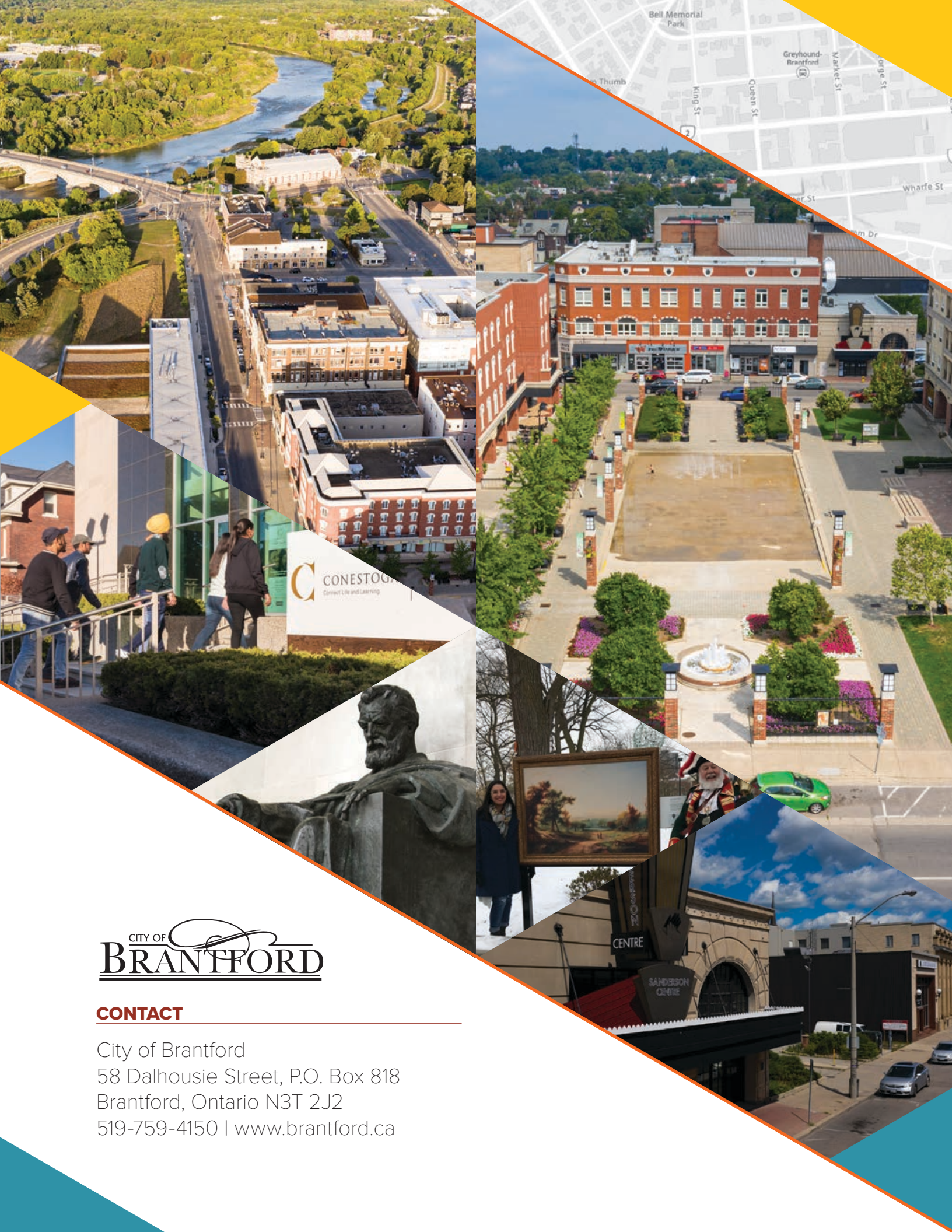
Following these annual forums, City staff will provide a report to Brantford City Council to ensure status updates regarding the Priority Plan are publicly available.

**“The Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant is proud to be a partner in Downtown Brantford. The downtown is the cultural, educational, and governance hub of our city, where business has the opportunity to thrive in service to diverse residents and visitors.”**

DAVID PRANG, PRESIDENT, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BRANTFORD-BRANT







# CITY OF BRANTFORD

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