

THE 2022

ANNUAL REPORT



DOWNTOWN ALBANY
Business Improvement District



Dear stakeholders,

Over the past 12+ months, we have witnessed the power of collaboration and the positive impact that can be achieved when property and businesses owners, elected officials, and neighbors come together to reinvigorate Downtown. As the core of the Capital City, serving both as the Central Business District and the Central Social District, we have experienced significant investment which continues to drive visitation. Events have surpassed pre-pandemic levels and Albany maintains its ranking as the best place to live in New York.

2022 represented the transformation of two underutilized areas into vibrant public spaces. William Street, a connective corridor between our largest event venues, is now home to

lighting and colorful art and furniture. And, the Albany Skyway, the region's first elevated park, opened. This investment has already led to the redevelopment of an underutilized park, with construction underway of Clinton Market Collective, a new market that will be home to diverse pop-up retail and signature events.

At the end of last year, we received close to \$1.6 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds from the City of Albany. We have already begun supporting small businesses through grants, training, and technical assistance. To assist our visitors, designs are being finalized for a new, comprehensive Wayfinding signage program for installation in late 2023.

Behind the scenes, equally impactful collaborations were taking place to create meaningful change across the pillars atop which we were founded. We worked with CDTA to provide free, reliable transportation to hospitality employees and City departments to help ensure everything from light pole outages to trash pick-up were expeditiously handled. We launched a new website which provides a more visually appealing and intuitive experience; and we added a full-time staff member to help enhance our marketing and special events.

As we reflect on the past year's achievements, challenges, and growth, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for your unwavering support and commitment to the BID. I look forward to working with you to achieve the exciting plans and ambitious goals we have set for 2023 and beyond.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Georgette Steffens". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Georgette Steffens

Core recovery

Downtown continued to recapture strides that were being made pre-pandemic. In the first four months of 2023, we experienced 77% of employees returning to the Central Business District with an average of 3.7 days a week in the office. This is a 32% increase over 2022 and well above the national return to office average of 50%.

The number of event nights in Downtown in just the first nine months of 2022 surpassed all of 2019. The pent-up demand from COVID restrictions, the opening of Empire Live and Empire Underground, and the addition and return of our sports teams, brought tens of thousands of people to enjoy all that Albany's Central Social District has to offer.

In 2022, over \$15 million was invested in the conversion of three vacant or underutilized commercial buildings, resulting in 60 market rate residential units. Construction continues on an additional 134 apartments, totaling \$20 million of investment. And, in early 2023 work began on a stalled \$3 million redevelopment project that will bring another 20 units online.



2022 saw 11 new businesses open.

They include:

- Bilingual PreK-6 school
- Albany's first Black controlled and charitable grocery store
- Co-working space focused on serving nonprofits
- Vintage thrift store
- Two art spaces
- Two beauty and wellness facilities
- Three restaurants

Albany among the best

- #1** Place to live in NY, 21st in the country | *U.S. News*
- #2** Best paying cities for Gen Z | *Estilos Media*
- #7** Best cities for sandwich lovers | *Apartment Guide*
- #10** Best cities to be a freelancer | *The Ascent*
- #12** Best cities for millennials | *Kenyan Magazine*

Reach for the skyway

An incredible new way to access Downtown from the riverfront opened in 2022 thanks to the Albany Skyway, which transformed an overbuilt highway ramp into an elevated park. The former 787 exit was repurposed as a landscaped, multi-use recreational destination for pedestrians and bicyclists that provides safe, non-motorized access to the Hudson River and the Corning Riverfront Park from downtown Albany and adjacent neighborhoods.



Photo: Hang Time Drones | hangtimedrones.com

At approximately 1/2 mile in length, the urban oasis features pedestrian lighting, seating, and planters along the path and a shade structure near the Broadway entrance. Amphitheater-style seating provides a restful setting with a view of the Hudson River.

New market concept coming

Directly across from the new Skyway, the redevelopment of an underused park at 11 Clinton Avenue is underway. Construction has started on the Clinton Market Collective which will transform the space into a more vibrant and welcoming park to support startup businesses, diverse pop-up retail, installments by local artists, and signature events.



The redesign is located at a key gateway to the Capital City that already greets more than 20,000 people whose daily destination is Downtown. When open, Clinton Market and the Skyway combined are projected to attract 100,000 visitors annually.



Partnership is 50,000 rides strong

In August, the BID joined with CDTA to provide free, unlimited bus passes to employees of any hospitality or retail business within the BID. Inspired by a Stakeholder and the desire to offer businesses hit hardest by COVID-19 an advantage in attracting and retaining employees, the Program quickly exceeded expectations. 34 businesses and 317 employees are participating, with over 50,000 rides taken.

The free bus pass program is a great program that has benefitted both Lodge's and our employees. It has helped to ease a financial burden for existing employees and helped us to recruit new employees who would not have been able to work for us prior. We appreciate the help of the BID and CDTA with this new program.

– **Mark Yonally**, *President, B.Lodge & Co.*

Core connections

2022 saw the culmination of major investments made to the William Street pedestrian walkway, including new overhead lighting, colorful street furniture, and an expansive 150-foot-long sidewalk mural by local artist Eugene O'Neill. These new treatments created a vibrant pedestrian corridor between the MVP Arena and the Albany Capital Center. The project connects the area's two largest entertainment venues in a way that makes visitors feel safe and comfortable to explore, while activating an underutilized alleyway for residents, small businesses, and conventioners. Already the space has been home to multiple private and public events attracting new users to Downtown.

'Back to Life' completes DRI-funded Capital Walls murals

The BID was proud to partner again with Albany Center Gallery and the Albany Barn on the final Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award-funded Capital Walls mural. The 19th mural in the series, "Back to Life" by artist D. Colin is located on both sides of an abutment between 677 Broadway and the Quackenbush Garage, and added 1,200-square feet of public art to Albany's Central Social District. The work is the last of four murals funded through Albany's \$10 million DRI funding.



Revamped website

In 2022 the BID launched a new website, providing visitors with a more modern, aesthetically appealing design and experience. Designed by Downtown-based firm Upside Collective, highlights of the website include updated menu options, news and events more prominently displayed on the homepage, filters for residential, commercial spaces, and property listings, and uniform image size across all listings.



2022 vs. 2021

33%
increase in impressions
across social media
platforms

98.6%
increase in
engagements across
social media platforms

25.7%
increase in link clicks
across social media
platforms

344,589
video views on content
the BID produced

35+
number of times BID events or
initiatives were covered by media

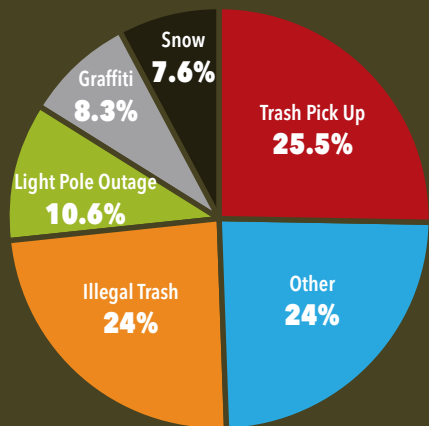




Core services

Working to improve the quality of life for those who live, work, and recreate here is a core part of the BID's mission, with staff working to ensure issues that can have a negative impact on our community are resolved as quickly as possible. Through routine canvassing of the District and information provided by the Clean Team, staff is able to report a variety of visual and safety concerns ranging from light pole and traffic signal outages to potholes and graffiti to the proper City departments. Thanks to relationships with department heads and technology the City has implemented, BID staff not only reports these issues, but is able to track their completion and report back to Stakeholders.

Quality of life issues reported to the City in 2022



2022 BID Sponsors

\$5,000+

O'Connell & Aronowitz
Remarkable Liquids

\$2,500 - 4,999

Albany Parking Authority
Capital Bank
CDTA

Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O'Shea
MVP Health Care
Pursuit Lending
Redburn Development Partners
Silver Therapeutics

\$1,000 - 2,499

Albany Distilling Company

\$1 - 999

B. Lodge & Co.
Best Fitness
Delivery.com
Galway Rock Winery
Renaissance Albany
The Mailworks

In-Kind

Discover Albany
Capital Region Chamber of
Commerce
Christ's Church Albany
Empire Live
Galway Rock Winery
Hampton Inn Downtown Albany
MVP Arena
Palace Theatre
SUNY Administration
The City of Albany
The Hot Yoga Spot
WEQX



Carm Basile

CEO of CDTA

2023 James M. DiNapoli Award Recipient

While CDTA was responsible for transporting nearly 14 million passengers during 2022-23, it is their partnerships that help drive the organization, CEO Carm Basile says. To that point, he highlights the collaboration with the BID that allowed CDTA to assist Downtown businesses with free, reliable transportation for their employees. Launched in Downtown in August 2022, the Universal Access Program provides free, unlimited access to CDTA bus transportation to employees at Downtown hospitality businesses hit hardest by COVID-19. Since its inception, 317 employees at 34 hotels, restaurants, and retailers have utilized the program, resulting in more than 50,000 total rides.

Basile has had a hand in bringing more than just passengers into the Downtown, which he calls "the centerpiece of the region." As Chair of the United Way of the Greater Capital Region, he worked to open The Blake Annex, a coworking space that focuses on bringing nonprofits together that has attracted 25 organizations and 145 employees to Downtown; as Sports Foundation of the Capital Region Board member, he worked on the NCAA Men's Basketball tournament, resulting in \$6.7 million in direct economic impact this March. The community leader is also part of the redevelopment of Liberty Park, including the completion of a feasibility study to transform the existing Downtown bus station into a state-of-the-art transit center.



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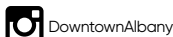
downtownalbany.org



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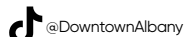
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