

### About the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc.



#### **OUR MISSION**

The Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit, professional Downtown management organization representing all property owners and tenants within the central business district. We undertake programs to improve Downtown's image, strengthen its economic base, increase its attractiveness and assure that Downtown continues to be clean, safe, welcoming and accessible. We are at the nexus of the public and private partnership that drives revitalization. As the steward of the Downtown Special Assessment District\*, we play an essential role in ensuring Downtown Syracuse remains a growing, dynamic, exciting place to live, work and visit.

\*The boundaries of the Special Assessment District are I-690 to the north; I-81 to the east; Adams Street to the south; and Onondaga Creek to the west.

#### **OUR HISTORY & HOW WE SERVE**

The Downtown Committee of Syracuse was established in 1975 when the Syracuse community came together, recognizing the role that a strong downtown could play in the overall health of the community. Our organization was created to provide additional levels of support and resources to help guide the growth of Downtown Syracuse. The birth of this public-private partnership with the City of Syracuse allowed for new investments in programs and services to support a healthy, thriving city center, ensuring continued growth for the region. As New York's first special assessment district, the Downtown Committee set the foundation for the formation of business improvement districts across the state.

Today, 48 years after our inception, we fulfill our mission by providing economic development, marketing and communications, environmental maintenance and security services to property owners, businesses, employees, residents and visitors throughout the 82 blocks that comprise Downtown Syracuse. Additionally, our team presents a series of annual events and operates special programs designed to support our constituent base and attract visitors to experience Downtown Syracuse.

#### FINANCIAL REPORT

The following represents the sources of our budgeted revenue and expense by program for the fiscal year, starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. In addition to the special assessment, revenue is derived from ticket sales, sponsorships and special programs, which expands our program delivery.

#### **Budgeted Sources of Revenue (2022-2023)**

Special Assessment: \$1,003,912

Interest: \$1,820

Transportation: \$152,000

Miscellaneous & Events: \$233,476 Grants & Other Sources: \$15,000

Total: \$1,406,208

#### **Budgeted Expenses (2022-2023)**

Administration: \$260,934

Environmental Maintenance: \$306,663

Marketing: \$226,011 Security: \$193,753

Economic Development: \$215,507

Transportation: \$90,990

Events: \$112,350 Total: \$1,406,208

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **OFFICERS**

Anthony Fiorito

Chairman

Partnership Properties

Jo Anne Chiarenza Gagliano

Vice Chairwoman

Environmental Design & Research

Melissa Zell

Secretary

Pioneer Companies

Peter Dunn

Treasurer

Central New York Community Foundation

#### **DIRECTORS**

Ruthnie Angrand City of Syracuse

Alberto Bianchetti

National Grid

Charlie Breuer

Hueber-Breuer Construction

Joseph Bryant

JE Bryant & Associates

**Brian Donnelly** 

Onondaga County

Susan Katzoff

City of Syracuse

Karyn Korteling

Pastabilities & Pasta's Daily Bread

**David Nutting** 

VIP Structures

Edward Riley

Brine Wells Development, LLC

Nicole Samolis

SKY Armory

Ron G. Tascarella

Pathfinder Bank

#### **STAFF**

Merike L. Treier

Executive Director

Kristine Sherlock

Assistant to the Executive Director

Heather Schroeder

Deputy Director &

Director of Economic Development

Conor Rockhill

Economic Development Specialist

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Vanessa Szwejbka

Communications Associate

**Anthony Pham** 

Marketing & Promotions Assistant

**Rob Travers** 

Director of Operations

David Kneer

Operations Staff

Kevin Stanard

Operations Staff

Robert Plumley, Jr.

Parking Staff

Thomas Schieno

Parking Staff

Tom Campanie

Director of Security

Richard Goldacker

Security Officer

Jim Hiltbrand

Security Officer

David Kimball

Security Officer

Dana Vinch

Security Officer



## Signature Event Highlights

Throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Downtown Committee of Syracuse produced the following events to support constituents and enhance the visibility of Downtown Syracuse as a destination.



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November's Fall 2022 Progress Breakfast highlighted three highly visible projects in Downtown Syracuse and the stories of how they came to be. We partnered with Mower to present the event featuring three speakers. Meg Tidd, CEO of VIP Structures, shared the amazing transformation of The Post; explaining how originally built as the home to Syracuse Newspapers, this building required a new vision with the changing times. Jeremy Thurston, president of The Hayner Hoyt Corporation, spoke to one of the most visible construction projects underway in Downtown Syracuse, City Center. Once proposed as a mix of commercial and residential space, City Center now features all commercial space and a roster of new downtown employers. Finally, Mike Intaglietta, executive director of The Landmark Theatre, spoke to the details of navigating the delicate renovations and upgrades while preserving the theatre's historic roots as, part of its most recent renovations.



For the first two weeks of March 2023, the delicious, high-quality cuisine for which Downtown Syracuse is known was on full display for the 19th annual serving of Downtown Syracuse Dining Weeks. The 2023 edition starred a record 53 eateries. Restaurants dished out lunch specials consisting of three components for \$15 (or less) and three-course dinner offerings for \$35 (or less). In addition, eight businesses famous for their selection of sweets put together "Sweet Treat" deals.

Downtown Dining Weeks was established in 2005 to generate business during mid-winter and has grown every year since its inception.



Every April, hundreds of volunteers participate in one of the largest Earth Day cleanups in the city. During the 2023 Earth Day celebration, over 250 community members rolled up their sleeves to support our beautification efforts in Downtown Syracuse. Throughout the morning, Downtown Committee staff met volunteers at designated locations in Downtown Syracuse. We provided gloves and trash bags, and outfitted our volunteers with stylish, green t-shirts. We also provided volunteers breakfast snacks and a lunch voucher to redeem at a Downtown Syracuse restaurant to show our appreciation for their help. Earth Day is a reminder for us to be better stewards of our earth. Thank you AmeriCU for your sponsorship of this year's event!





The 2023 Spring Progress Breakfast, presented in partnership with National Grid, focused on a series of transformational projects that have helped activate underutilized spaces and call attention to how a Downtown location influences talent retention and attraction. Norman Jemal, Managing Principal of Douglas Development Corporation, discussed the redevelopment of the 126-year-old former Onondaga County Savings Bank, now called The Treasury. Peter Belyea, CEO of CXtec, talked about the upcoming move of its employees to their new 31,000 sq ft office in City Center. Rob O'Connor, Co-Founder of ELITE Gaming, shared the recent opening of the Esports and gaming arena in The MOST building and how Esports is a rapidly growing industry.

## Celebrating the Holidays in Downtown

With the Tree Lighting and Lighting of the Menorah in Clinton Square, the festive holiday decorations lining Downtown's streets, and falling snow, few settings compare with Downtown Syracuse during the holiday season. Downtown is where cherished memories are relived and where new traditions are established. The Downtown Committee implements programs to support this experience.

# Social Media Campaign

For the holiday season, we highlighted the many shopping and gift options, services and holiday experiences found throughout Downtown Syracuse. Each day, from November 25 through December 24, we featured festive videos showcasing the must-see attractions and places to shop throughout Downtown.



# The Downtown Syracuse Holiday Guide 2022

Starting the day after Thanksgiving through
December 24, the Downtown Syracuse Holiday
Guide highlighted the experiences, traditions,
special offerings, services and gifts that
Downtown's retailers, restaurants and cultural
institutions creatively provide and deliver
during the holiday season. Four sections
showcased Downtown Syracuse traditions:
Holiday Pop-Up Shops; Holiday Experiences;
Downtown Deals; and the Window Wonderland
Walk & Contest.

#### Window Wonderland Walk & Contest

WNTOWN

This past holiday season, 40 businesses decorated their windows in winter scenes and holiday wonderlands to participate in our 7th Annual Window Wonderland Walk & Contest. Designed to boost holiday spirits, entertain visitors and attract new customers to shop and experience the variety of retail offerings found in Downtown Syracuse, the contest also encourages the community to walk throughout Downtown to explore the displays, then vote for their favorites online. Prizes are provided through the Downtown Syracuse Foundation.

# Spreading the Holiday News

We launched a comprehensive marketing campaign to get the word out on the Downtown Syracuse Holiday Guide. Billboards, kiosk posters, radio and television ads and weekly newsletters helped spread the word that Downtown Syracuse is the place to shop, make memories and celebrate the holidays.

## **Downtown Decorations**

The Downtown Committee and the
City of Syracuse maintain a
contract to support the holiday
decorating that takes place
throughout Downtown Syracuse.
Festive wreaths and a lighted star
help spread holiday cheer through
the heart of our city!







### **Getting The Word Out**

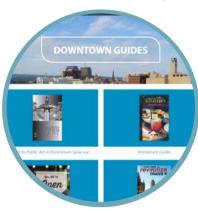
The Marketing & Communications department promotes Downtown as the center of the community and serves as the resource for **everything Downtown**. By regularly collaborating with business owners, cultural institutions, individuals and the arts, our department showcases the diverse array of retail, restaurant and cultural offerings that make Downtown a vibrant destination. Our staff ensures information is easily accessible and communicated to all stakeholders.

#### **Downtown at your fingertips**



New this year, our team brought more opportunities to explore Downtown right from your fingertips. We revamped our weekly newsletter, posted on Tuesdays, and showcased a Property of the Week on Wednesdays. We added a social media component to drive people to our website and help them discover the amazing spaces found in our district by introducing a new Find it Friday feature.

#### **DowntownSyracuse.com Refresh**



In January 2023 our website got a refresh showcasing the same valuable information in a more user-friendly format to enhance the experience and make it easy to find all the information you seek. The visually engaging format makes searching and obtaining information on our website simple and entertaining! Scroll through dozens of beautiful photos of our community while learning about and planning your next trip to Downtown.

#### **Downtown Did You Know**

In February 2023, our team added a new *Did You Know* section in our weekly Tuesday newsletter, and posted it to our social media pages on Thursdays. Our staff generates useful and fascinating statistics, demographic and market information to help our district grow and thrive and we wanted to share this information in a fun and interactive way.

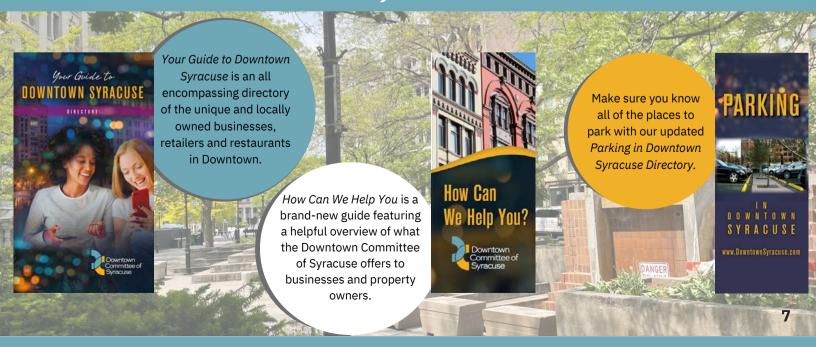


#### **Meet Our Team**

This year, we started to introduce members of our team and highlight the support their department provides toward our mission of Downtown Syracuse's revitalization. In our monthly introduction newsletters, we feature a member of our Economic Development, Marketing & Communications, Security or Environmental Maintenance teams to be sure that Downtown businesses are aware of what is available and are utilizing the resources we provide.



### New Year, New Guides



### 2023 Downtown Awards of Excellence

The strength of Downtown Syracuse derives from the commitment and investments of many people who work hard to create a thriving district. Our Annual Meeting is a celebration of all of the announcements, people, projects and places that have contributed to Downtown's growth, diversity and overall vibrancy. The Downtown Awards of Excellence, presented at the Annual Meeting, recognized efforts that have positively transformed our downtown landscape during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Awards are given in three categories. Thank you to National Grid for serving as our presenting sponsor of the Awards of Excellence and to AmeriCU for serving as presenting sponsor of our Annual Meeting.



Before (2014)

#### **Urban Innovation Award: City Center**

The Urban Innovation award is given for a successful, trail-blazing activity in a previously undeveloped area or facet of Downtown Syracuse. A \$37 million plan to redevelop the former Sibley's Department store has created City Center. The incredible vision, commitment and partnership of The Redhouse Arts Center and Hayner Hoyt Corporation is why a project of this magnitude has come to fruition. Expanding and creating long term investments was the shared vision for this project, and with a roster of new downtown employers occupying the space, its future is strong.



After (2023)

#### **Heart of Downtown Award: The MOST**



The Heart of Downtown Award is given for efforts that positively affect how people feel about Downtown Syracuse. The Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology (MOST) is built on a foundation of providing hands-on STEAM education throughout the community and to their visitors annually. Being located in the center of our community makes them accessible to surrounding school districts and families. With their extensive and growing list of impactful educational programs and their core values positively impacting Downtown Syracuse, they embody the essence of this award.



#### Perfect Partner Award: Erie Canal Museum



The Perfect Partner Award is given to individuals and organizations whose initiatives, advocacy and commitment positively impact Downtown Syracuse. The Erie Canal Museum shares the history of Downtown Syracuse and the greater region while ensuring the stories of the canal continue into the future. The Erie Canal Museum is committed to new programs to engage the community and provide a comprehensive experience to their 20,000 visitors annually. Recently, they partnered with Talking Cursive Brewery for Beer, Bikes and Barges, a guided bike ride along the Empire State Trail that finishes at a local brewery, expanding the audience for downtown's many amenities.



### Partnerships and Progress

Our team is dedicated to keeping Downtown Syracuse growing and thriving. Through multiple channels including partnerships, special projects, and grants the Downtown Committee focuses on the shared goals of the community and works towards the continued revitalization of Downtown Syracuse.

#### **Special Projects**



The Downtown Committee partnered with the Downtown Syracuse Foundation, Syracuse Parks Conservancy and The MOST to purchase and install a Triceratops Climber in The MOST's front lawn. The 1500-pound life-size concrete triceratops skull was unveiled in August 2022 at The MOST's grand re-opening of their Dino Zone exhibit, and it's a permanent outdoor play structure in Armory Square.

#### **Keeping Downtown Clean**

As part of its cost sharing agreement with the City of Syracuse, the Downtown Committee purchased 20 Smokers' Outpost cigarette urns and distributed them to bars, event spaces and nightlife locations throughout the downtown district. These additions to the downtown streetscape will help to curb cigarette litter.



#### **Partnerships in our Neighborhoods**



Neighborhood associations provide opportunities for property owners, businesses and residents to come together to advance a shared vision for their neighborhoods. The Downtown Committee provides staff support to the Armory Square, Hanover Square and the Southern Downtown neighborhood groups.

#### **Revitalize Syracuse**

Each year, the Downtown
Committee partners with the
Central New York Business Journal
to publish Revitalize Syracuse. This
comprehensive communications
piece provides an in depth look at
the changing landscape of
Downtown Syracuse highlighting
new apartments, influxes of
business and the overall impacts to
our region.



## \$10 Million for Downtown Revitalization Initiatives

In late 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul announced Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) projects for awarded cities across New York State, including the city of Syracuse.

The \$10 million grant, awarded to the city, will focus on projects improving walkability and connectivity between the Southwest Gateway and Downtown Syracuse, expanding business and housing opportunities and improving community services.

This project includes redesigning the Salina and Onondaga intersection, improvements to the Onondaga/Clinton Street railroad bridge, installing business corridor broadband, revitalizing buildings for mixed-use and new construction on the Rescue Mission's campus.



Photo courtesy of New York Governor's Office.

The image above shows how the DRI award would activate space under West Onondaga Street's Railroad Bridge.

### **Growing Downtown Syracuse**

New residents continue to move to Downtown Syracuse, major employers consistently inquire about available space and new retailers keep opening new storefronts. Our Economic Development team members are the keepers of Downtown data and connect businesses to resources that strengthen Downtown's economic base.

#### We provide resources to businesses through:

- Tracking real estate opportunities that meet businesses' needs
- Providing commercial occupancy reports
- Identifying incentives and grant opportunities
- · Compiling up-to-date demographic information and market research
- Providing comprehensive housing and parking brochures
- · Acting as a liaison with the City of Syracuse
- Connections to technical assistance providers for business training and resources

#### Research, Reports and Guides

Our team produces and provides comprehensive reports including a Downtown Syracuse Development Forecast, Housing Guide, Parking Guide, Market Data for Retail, Retail Wish List and Commercial Occupancy Reports.

# Commercial Occupancy Reports

Our team released two Commercial Occupancy Reports this fiscal year, benchmarking office and retail data in August 2022 and April 2023. Between the two reports, Downtown saw increases in Class B and Class C office occupancy, a slight decrease (3%) in Class A leasing, and a nearly 5% increase in retail occupancy, driven by a mix of entertainment, personal services, food/beverage and shop openings.

#### **Retail Wish List**

Downtown Syracuse welcomed 28 new ground-floor businesses between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023 – checking off several retail and entertainment categories from our updated *Retail Wish List*.

LACK CITIZENS BRIGADE

## Market Data for Retail

We published the 2023 edition of Market Data for Retail, highlighting downtown neighborhoods, and sharing demographic and commercial data to assist business owners in choosing to locate and expand in Downtown.

Downtown Syracuse



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#### **District Growth & Development**

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, 20 projects totaling more than \$180 million in downtown investment created seven new Class A office headquarters (including five moves into downtown from outside the district); more than 135 new housing units; and enhanced public infrastructure and tourism amenities.

# 2023 Downtown Development Forecast

In March 2023, staff released a new *Downtown Development Forecast* highlighting redevelopment projects underway within Downtown's 82 blocks. This forecast includes total investments, new housing units, new employees downtown and enhanced arts and cultural facilities and infrastructure in the central business district.

#### Grants

Our Economic Development team secured \$155,000 in grant funding to enhance Downtown's appeal. This funding will be deployed for public art and music programs, streetscape enhancements and support for our Downtown Farmers Market.



Completed during summer 2022 by the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council and published in September 2022, this report provides vital information on street-level activity and assists with retail recruitment efforts. The last pedestrian count was completed in 2017, so this report constituted our first pandemic-era count and provided five-year comparisons. And, for the first time, the count included not only pedestrian and bicycling activity, but also downtown use of the City-wide Veo scooter share system.



#### **Promoting Downtown**

Staff members engaged in Downtown tours, presentations and media interviews. Highlights included: planning, moderating, and presenting at the International Downtown Association's Economic Development Summit in Norfolk, VA; highlighting the results of our first-ever Downtown Retailer Demographic Survey through a series of media stories; and welcoming FustCharles and CXtec to their new downtown office headquarters with presentations, welcome bags and customized tours for staff.

## Property of the Week

Through the Downtown
Committee newsletter and
social media channels, 45
leasable spaces were highlighted
in our *Property of the Week*feature, amplifying the
audience for building owners
and brokers.



## A Proactive Approach

Downtown Syracuse is one of the safest neighborhoods for residents, employees and visitors. A strong partnership between our Downtown Committee Security staff and the Syracuse Police Department - dating back to 1995 - facilitates collaborative approaches to address public safety and quality of life needs throughout the central business district.

#### We maintain Downtown's status as a safe neighborhood through:

- Operating the Downtown Security & Information Center, located at 230 Harrison Street
- Answering and responding to calls to 423-HELP, a non-emergency phone number set up to address quality of life concerns
- Holding personal safety seminars for Downtown Syracuse residents, employers and employees
- Offering security audits for Downtown businesses
- Patrolling Downtown daily
- Serving as a liaison between the business community and the Syracuse Police Department
- Distributing security information to Downtown businesses and residents
- Proactively addressing quality of life concerns by actively connecting social service providers to those in need of outreach services

#### **Meet the Beat**

The Downtown Committee Security officers patrol Downtown to proactively address quality of life concerns to maintain Downtown's status as one of the safest neighborhoods for residents, employees and visitors. Security officers are on duty in the morning, afternoon and evening Monday through Friday and during the afternoon and evenings on the weekends.

## Strong Partnership

Our Downtown Committee Security team maintains a strong partnership with the Syracuse Police Department which facilitates collaborative approaches to address public safety and quality of life needs throughout the central business district.



Security Cameras serve as an important tool to enhance the sense of safety and preserve the quality of life throughout Downtown Syracuse.

Owned by the Downtown Committee, the cameras are wired into the Syracuse Police Department's existing camera network. The partnership allows for the operation of almost two dozen cameras throughout the central business district to protect the significant investments underway.

#### **Security Brochures**

Travel Smarts, Office Smarts, Car Smarts, Street Smarts and Living Smart provide common sense safety tips designed with the public in mind. Brochures are available upon request.

## Maintaining Our Public Spaces

The Downtown Committee undertakes a series of beautification, maintenance and enhancement programs to support the continued revitalization of Downtown Syracuse. Our Environmental Maintenance crew plays a critical role in efforts to ensure Downtown Syracuse is attractive, clean, welcoming and accessible.



- · Daily litter control
- Maintaining street furnishings
- Mowing grass, cutting weeds and trimming hedges
- Engaging in beautification initiatives, including plantings and hanging flower baskets
- Removing graffiti
- Maintaining trees throughout Downtown Syracuse
- Assisting with sidewalk snow plowing during the winter months\*

\*In the city of Syracuse, sidewalk maintenance, including snow plowing, is the responsibility of the property owner. The Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc. is not liable for injury incurred as a result of insufficient removal of snow by a property owner.

## Beautification Through the Seasons

Our Environmental Maintenance staff is at work year-round to make sure Downtown Syracuse continues to be a welcoming, clean and accessible destination for residents, employees and visitors. No matter the weather, our team is dedicated to these initiatives.

#### **Hanging Flower Baskets**

One of the Downtown Syracuse community's favorite ways to mark the start of summer is by the installation of hanging flower baskets along Downtown's streetscape. In May 2023, over 300 hanging flower baskets brought vibrancy to Downtown Syracuse in the form of purple petunias. The hanging flower basket program started in 2011 in partnership with the Cathedral Square Neighborhood Association and quickly expanded to encompass the Armory Square, Clinton Square, Hanover Square and Heart of Downtown neighborhoods as part of the Downtown Committee's overall beautification efforts. The program is financially supported by more than 50 sponsors.

### **Sharing Downtown's Stories**

Downtown Syracuse is the community's destination for everything! The Downtown Committee uses our platforms to connect with our community and to highlight what's happening throughout the central business district. With 28,000 followers across all social media platforms - and growing daily - we have seen a 10% growth in followers and increased engagement this year through new contests and giveaways, Did You Know posts, Find it Friday segments, Property of the Week features and all the posts we share to keep you in the know on all things Downtown Syracuse.





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