

Carleton Place

BIA

Strategic Plan

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The Downtown Carleton Place Business Association is a Business Improvement Area (B.I.A) as described in Section 220 of the Municipal Act (Province of Ontario). It is governed by the Board of Management a Board of the Town of Carleton Place. All property owners and businesses operating within the designated geographic area of the Town of Carleton Place are members, and as such, pay a special tax levy.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our aim is to promote downtown Carleton Place as a vibrant destination. Featuring a healthy commercial, retail, residential, and entertainment centre of our town. To attract more people to live, shop, work and play.

VISION STATEMENT

To make the downtown of Carleton Place the social centre of the community where a hub of artistic expression and a vibrant, exciting business community brings pride, recognition and an appreciation for the BIA area.

Goal 1 **Marketing**

Implement customer-driven programs that effectively market
Downtown Carleton Place.

Objectives:

- (a)** Advertising Programs should offer co-operative advertising opportunities for the membership and promote downtown as a whole.
- (b)** Special events should present downtown as the town's activity centre and be integrated with all marketing functions including merchandising.
- (c)** In terms of tourism, the objective of Downtown Carleton Place programming should be to attract local citizens and their guests to the downtown.
- (d)** Collect marketing information for use by association committees and members.
- (e)** Develop programs that help achieve consistent retail standards.
- (f)** Raise awareness of downtown Carleton Place as a destination for day trippers.
- (g)** Pursue long-term partnerships and strategic alliances to achieve marketing objectives for the downtown. (i.e. Town of Carleton Place, Chamber of Commerce and other community non-profit groups and associations).

Strategies:

Advertising:

- Develop and maintain an advertising program that offers co-operative advertising opportunities for the membership.
- Advertising should be professional, have integrity and reflect Downtown Carleton Place's positioning as the premier business district.
- Build a consistent look and theme throughout all advertising.
- Explore new technologies and methods of communicating with those who use the downtown.
- Consider using external expertise as required on special projects.
- Advertising should be undertaken to enhance positive and combat negative perceptions of the downtown.
- Advertising programs should be reviewed regularly to examine the effectiveness of their integration with special events.
- There should be regular assessments of the impact and effectiveness of advertising programs.
- Pursue fresh, strong, and new creative concepts in advertising.

Events:

- Schedule events in a way that takes into consideration the needs of the membership and their business cycles, balanced with the practical constraints of presenting events successfully.
- Employ marketing integration techniques to all appropriate events.
- Events should be planned with clear target markets in mind.
- Develop “seed” events, directly or with community groups, to “grow” the major events of the future.
- Pursue advantageous partnerships with Arts Carleton Place, the Farmers Market and other service groups.

Tourism:

- Pursue a program of promotions and community involvement to create local enthusiasm for our downtown.
- Raise awareness and promote downtown Carleton Place as a destination for day trippers.
- Create partnerships between B.I.A’s from other communities in an effort to expand the reach of our promotion.

Market Information:

- Collect and update information by way of surveys, focus groups and other techniques on a regular basis. Conduct regular, systematic reviews of contests, ballots, events, attendance levels, pedestrian counts, participation levels and cost/benefit analyses.
- Undertake marketing research of key target groups including residents, high-volume or “power” shoppers, downtown employees, and tourists.
- Promote training of service staff(s) so they are well informed on, among other things, product/shopping information, events, Carleton Place programming and tourism information/issues.
- Examine qualitative information as well as comparative studies with other communities.
- Consider use of new technologies to gather and distribute information.
- Keep downtown members up-to-date on current trends (i.e. bring in expert speakers).
- Assess emerging trends (such as aging populations, new technologies, cashless consumers and Big Box retailers/category killers) and identify their future impact on Carleton Place marketing strategies.

Consistent Retail Standards:

- Since retailers cannot be forced to honor consistent retail standards, Carleton Place's strategy should be to pursue options where compliance is of real benefit to the members.
- Liaise with Downtown Development to ensure new members are aware of the importance of consistent retail standards.
- Continue to assist by way of advertising and events to promote hours of operation, returns policy, display standards and awards etc.
- Consider focus campaigns (by block or sector, or timing), incentives and alliances as tools to assist promotion of consistent standards.
- Build on small successes.

Goal 2

Municipal Liaison

Effective liaison between member businesses and
Town Council.

Objectives

- (a)** Two way communications.
- (b)** Have Downtown Carleton Place representatives on appropriate Town of Carleton Place Committees.
- (c)** Positive relationships with Town politicians and administrators.

Strategies

- “Contact” newsletter distribution
- Frequent topical timely “Newsflashes”
- News releases
- Media contact sheet
- Personal contacts
- Advertisements
- Reports to Town Council
- Meetings with Mayor, Administrators, Councilors
- Delegations at Town Council meetings.
- Joint projects and events with the Town.

Goal 3

Downtown Environment

Ensure downtown is physically attractive and “user friendly”.

Objectives

- (a)** Encourage year round maintenance to roadways, sidewalks, streets lamps and benches.
- (b)** Cleanliness.
- (c)** Effective garbage removal and litter control.
- (d)** Beautification programs.
- (e)** High level of “Sidewalk Use” for commercial and event purposes.
- (f)** Effective transportation.
- (g)** Integrate parking systems, motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists.
- (h)** A safe and secure downtown.

Strategies

- Continue to develop Downtown Carleton Place maintenance and beautification programs
- Sidewalk snow removal: encourage businesses, and assist the town in both awareness and enforcement of the Bylaw
- Floral beautification
- Flags and banners
- Christmas decorations and LED lighting project.
- Public awareness campaigns
- Parking Marketing plans, maps, signage improvements.
- Development of street entertainment
- Security
- Liaise with the Police, Bylaw, businesses, and residents

Goal 4

Economic Development

Encourage and support economic development initiatives that benefit Downtown Carleton Place!

Objectives

- (a)** Participate in active business recruitment/retention programs.
- (b)** Create an attractive “Mix”-including retail, office, service, government, entertainment, residential, cultural and community uses.
- (c)** Commitment to the Town’s Official Plan.
- (d)** Highest use of downtown properties through appropriate development and redevelopment.
- (e)** Collect marketing information for use by association committees and members.
- (f)** Develop programs that help achieve consistent retail standards.

Strategies

Recruitment:

- Assess opportunities.
- Liaise with Town of Carleton Place, Chamber of Commerce, property owners, and realtors.
- Retail mix analysis.
- Market studies.
- Land use database.
- Prospecting.
- Focus on Eastern Ontario independent businesses, secondary are franchises and nationals etc.
- Leasing agent involvement.
- Trade fairs.
- Partner with other agencies.
- Local developers.
- Recruitment/retention literature.
- “Lure Kit”, and “Locations”, space available information and advice.

Retention:

- Training.
- Support groups.
- Referrals to “mentor” business people/simulate networking.
- Expand Welcome Program; information on garbage pickup, signage bylaws, etc.

Goal 5

Advocacy

To be the voice of businesses located in Downtown Carleton Place and represent their interests.

Objectives

- (a)** To be knowledgeable of the range of concerns and interests of the membership.
- (b)** To represent the membership at Town Council.
- (c)** To represent the membership to government agencies and associations that deal with provincial level and federal level issues.
- (d)** To identify to members of concern/interest.

Strategies

- Regular formal and informal surveys of member attitudes.
- Memberships.
 - International Downtowns Association
 - Festivals and Events Ontario
 - Retail Council of Canada
 - Economic Development Council of Ontario/Economic Developers Assoc. of Canada
- Liaise with other local business organizations. i.e. Chamber regarding issues of mutual interest.
- Monitor business communications, i.e. Downtown Idea Exchange, Downtown Promotional Reporter, and other BIA News Releases.
- Read Council and committees agendas and minutes.

Goal 6

Organization

To operate a professional and credible member-driven association.

Objectives

- (a)** Provide effective staffing for Board and Committees.
- (b)** Public relations and profile.
- (c)** Professional representation Downtown Carleton Place to appropriate local, provincial and federal, public and private agencies.
- (d)** Responsible financial management and reporting.
- (e)** Policy development.
- (f)** Planning.
- (g)** Visible, accessible office.

Strategies

- Annual General meetings.
- Open door policy in the office.
- Liaise with community groups.
- Regular personnel performance reviews.
- Continuous improvement programs.
- Board member and volunteer training and orientation.
- Professional development programs.