

# MANAGEMENT

## DDB Office

The City provides the DDB with an office in the lower level of City Hall - access the north east doors and we are easy to find.

The 2024 budget allows \$15,600 to cover the following expenses and services. Office supplies \$1,000, Telephone and internet services \$300, Accounting, Bookkeeping and Legal costs \$2,500, Insurance \$4,800, Board and Committee meetings \$200, Bank service charges \$100, Seminars / Conference expenses \$2,200, Membership fees \$1,100, Annual General Meeting \$3,000 and Computer expenses \$500.

## Meetings

Board Meeting are typically held at 8am on the first Wednesday of each month in City Hall Room 304. The DDB meetings are open to all property and business owners in our Downtown. Please plan to attend or email [DDB@stthomas.ca](mailto:DDB@stthomas.ca) if you would like to obtain the Zoom link.

## Office Staff

Throughout 2023 we continued to employ Annette Sbarra as our Office Administrator to manage our DDB office at City Hall. Annette maintained our office duties, updated the DDB Members database, website and social media sites and was our liaison with all Downtown business owners. Annette also worked on all special projects like the Nostalgia Nights Car Show and the Tree Lighting Celebration. The 2024 Wages and Benefits budget allows for \$20,000 to cover these and other office related personnel expenses.

## Newsletters

The DDB newsletter is distributed by email to all DDB members on our email list on a bi-weekly basis. The newsletter updates members on recent and upcoming events in the downtown, and other relevant local information. Please ensure that the DDB has your correct email address.



## Website

The DDB website, [www.downtownstthomas.ca](http://www.downtownstthomas.ca) continues to be updated to display ongoing and upcoming events as well as a full membership directory. Thanks to the work of Sarah Van Pelt, a new website is being designed with a rollout planned for early 2024. The 2024 budget for our Website is part of the Promotions budget encompassing Website, JoeThornton Centre arena wall and Social Media.

## **Social Media**

The DDB also maintains a Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/downtownstthomas](http://www.facebook.com/downtownstthomas) which is continually updated with information from events in our downtown. We also maintain an X (Twitter) feed [@stthomasddb](https://twitter.com/stthomasddb) and an Instagram site [www.instagram.com/stthomasddb](http://www.instagram.com/stthomasddb).

## **DDB Membership Business Directory Database**

A new membership database was developed in 2015. As part of the new website design, a complete review of the database is being conducted. If you require changes to your contact information, please contact our office. This database was expanded to include a section that identifies all businesses that accept Downtown Dollars. Our directory is available for viewing at [www.downtownstthomasdirectory.ca](http://www.downtownstthomasdirectory.ca) and there is a tab on the DDB website and on the Railway City Tourism website. Please ensure that your business information is correct.

## **CIP - Community Improvement Plan**

The CIP program is facilitated by the City of St Thomas and our DDB is represented on this committee by Russell Schnurr, to understand and provide input on the developments in our Downtown. Visit the City website at [www.stthomas.ca](http://www.stthomas.ca) and search “CIP” or visit our DDB website at [www.downtownstthomas.ca](http://www.downtownstthomas.ca) for more information.

## **Municipal Heritage Committee**

The Municipal Heritage Committee is a City of St Thomas committee and our DDB is represented on this committee by Russell Schnurr, to understand and provide input on the heritage developments in our Downtown. The Downtown Historic Conservation District plan which was implemented by the City in early 2019, will bring a higher level of control on the historic features of our Downtown. Visit [www.stthomas.ca](http://www.stthomas.ca) and search “Municipal Heritage” for full details.

## **Special Events Committee**

The Special Events Committee is a City of St Thomas committee and our DDB is represented on this committee by Earl Taylor, to understand and provide input on the events happening in our City.

## **Sign Bylaw**

This new Bylaw, came into force in February 2018, setting rules for the use of temporary signs throughout the City eliminating all temporary signs in our Downtown Core. This Bylaw also ensured that Downtown businesses can install Sidewalk A-Frame signs during business hours and better defines the use of our business facade signs.

## **Vacant Property Tax Rebate**

Started in 2017 and implemented in January 1, 2019, property owners who maintain a vacant property will no longer be able to apply for a 30% municipal property tax reduction. We have also been advised that the funds which would have been rebated to the owners of such vacant properties were moved into the Community Improvement Program.

## **Downtown Policing**

In November 2022, St Thomas Police Services increased their Downtown Policing Initiative and opened a temporary office at 574 Talbot Street. Chief Roskamp has recently reported that 8 Special Constable have been placed in our downtown keeping an eye on Downtown happenings and building a positive relationship between Police and Downtown merchants, property owners and visitors.

This team can be contacted anytime at [CRU@stps.on.ca](mailto:CRU@stps.on.ca) or via cellphone at 226-374-8815.

## **St Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre**

The DDB supports the STEPAC with a \$1,000 donation each year which is used to sponsor a juried art show that brings further awareness of our DDB to the community.

## **CCTV Cameras**

In the spring of 2019, the DDB presented an idea of installing CCTV Cameras at each of the 8 major intersection of Downtown St Thomas. The goal was to implement a system that would allow residents to feel safer in our Downtown as well as to assist STPS in crime reduction.

The CCTV camera installations were completed in 2021 with 8 cameras along Talbot Street at St George, Elgin, Hiawatha, Moore, Ross, Manitoba, CASO Crossing and Woodworth. In November 2022, a 9th camera was installed at Talbot Street and Princess Avenue. The DDB budget allocates \$1,800 from the Community Projects funds to pay for the camera fibre optic internet costs. The DDB offers our sincere thanks to the STPS team for their dedicated work to make this happen.

## Social Issues

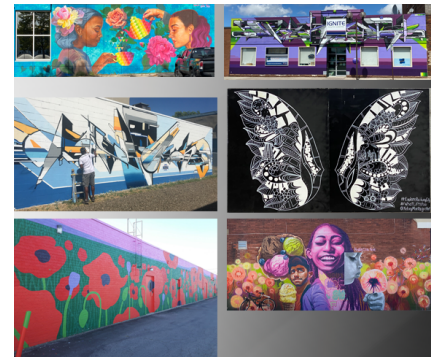
A number of new and some old issues continue to be a concern in 2023 including Homelessness, Mental Health, Drug Addiction, Sharps, Crime and Garbage. Although these issues fall beyond the original mandate of the DDB, they affect our Downtown property and business owners. As a result, we are committed to finding a solution. If you require assistance, please send your input, concerns and solutions to [customerservice@stthomas.ca](mailto:customerservice@stthomas.ca) and copy the DDB at [ddb@stthomas.ca](mailto:ddb@stthomas.ca).

## Downtown Crosswalks

As part of the 2023 Talbot Street reconstruction, we are happy to report that 3 non-signalised crosswalks were changed to the new “on-demand” signalised crossings. This will create a much safer experience for our Downtown shoppers.

## Murals

Although the amazing murals found throughout our Downtown are not sponsored by the DDB, our DDB is extremely pleased that other community organizations have found our Downtown to be the perfect canvas for these artworks. A perfect reason to take a stroll Downtown.



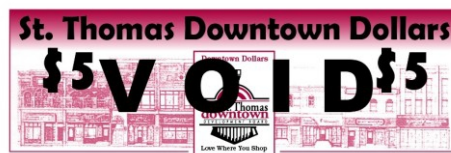
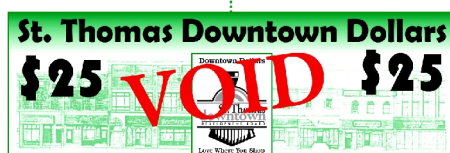
## Membership Guide

In 2021, the DDB produced a Membership Guide that is used to explain what the DDB is all about and how we can help your business through the various Promotional events that we sponsor as well as the Beautification projects we complete throughout the year. Thanks to Sarah Van Pelt, a refresh of the guide was conducted in late 2023 and will be distributed to all members in early 2024 to ensure that our events and programs are understood by all. If you wish to obtain one, in either digital or print form, please connect with us.



## Accepting Downtown Dollars

The St Thomas Downtown Development Board created the Downtown Dollars Program to encourage shoppers to shop Downtown rather than at local big box stores or online. Please checkout the Downtown Dollar program on our website at <https://downtownstthomas.ca/downtown-dollars/>



***Please welcome and accept these Downtown Dollars as CASH***

If a shopper gives you Downtown Dollars and there is change, you must give them back the difference. Remember, these Downtown Dollars are the same as cash. Usually, the shopper will purchase more than the value of the Downtown Dollars that they have. But, in some cases, they will only buy a particular item. The shopper must not feel obligated or pressured to purchase more.

When your business has Downtown Dollars to redeem, please call or email the DDB office and we will drop by and write you a cheque for the full face value of the Downtown Dollars you've received.

The St Thomas Downtown Development Board has just wrapped up the third year of selling Downtown Dollars at a significant promotional discount and there are still many Downtown Dollars waiting to be spent. We want Downtown shoppers to have a pleasant experience while shopping Downtown and at your business. The success of the program rests with each participating business.

*Tip - Ensure that you promote the fact that you accept Downtown Dollars in all of your promotional advertising. To encourage shoppers to visit, perhaps offer a small discount when your customers redeem Downtown Dollars at your store.*

## **Partnerships and Sponsorships**

We are all in this together. The DDB is extremely appreciative of the many partnerships that have been developed with a number of groups and organizations over the past number of years.

Our many partners include:

- \* City of St Thomas - Municipal Heritage, CIP, Special Events, Permits, Infrastructure
- \* St Thomas Parks and Recreation - Hanging Flower Baskets and Planters, Downtown Parkettes
- \* Elgin County Railway Museum - DDB Coach
- \* Railway City Tourism - Murals Projects, Arts Crawl
- \* The Small Business Enterprise Centre - Bridges to Better Business
- \* St Thomas Economic Development Corporation - So Much More Life
- \* Talbot Teen Centre - Social Media Training
- \* St Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre - Sponsorship of a Juried Art Event
- \* St Thomas Public Library - Downtown sponsorship initiatives
- \* St Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce - Membership and business networking, So Much More Life
- \* St Thomas Police Services - CCTV Cameras and Downtown safety initiatives
- \* Entegrus - LED Christmas Lights
- \* Horton Market - Christmas Market
- \* Andrew Gunn Consulting and Young & Free Press - Mural Projects
- \* Elgin County Economic Development - So Much More Life program
- \* MP Karen Vecchio & MPP Rob Flack - Advocacy
- \* St Thomas Fire Department - Santa escort to the Tree Lighting Celebration
- \* St Thomas Optimist Club - Santa Claus Parade, Nostalgia Nights Car Show, Oktoberfest