City of Cambridge

YEAR IN REVIEW

2021

PROSPERITY

Business Improvement Areas create new opportunities (and memories) in Cambridge’s core areas

Cambridge is fortunate to have three unique and historic core areas to celebrate: Preston, Hespeler and Galt (Downtown Cambridge). Each of these historic cores includes a Business Improvement Area (BIA) that focuses on developing and delivering programs to improve and market their area.

In 2021, a year that was once again defined by uncertainty due to the pandemic, promoting local business and bringing community members together safely was more important than ever. The Downtown Cambridge BIA, Hespeler Village BIA and Preston Towne Centre BIA were up to the challenge.

There are more than 250 BIAs in Ontario. They are non-profit organizations that are governed by a board of directors, monitored by the municipality and guided by the Ontario Municipal Act. All businesses within a BIA pay a yearly levy that is included in their property taxes. These funds are used to market and beautify the BIA area, creating welcoming destinations for locals and visitors.

Although 2021 was a year marked by change and uncertainty for our business community, it also created new opportunities to creatively promote, beautify and come together.

Business Improvement Areas in Cambridge

Downtown Cambridge BIA
www.downtowncambridgebia.ca

Hespeler Village BIA
www.hespelervillagebia.ca

Preston Towne Centre BIA
www.discoverpreston.ca
Opportunities to beautify

From streetscape improvements to patio umbrellas, there were many contributions to beautifying Cambridge’s core areas in 2021. Hespeler Village introduced “Picnic table pop-ups” in the summer, while Preston Towne Centre created a free all-weather skating rink with synthetic ice in Central Park where children can learn to skate.

All three core areas hosted light installations as part of the City’s award-winning Winter Illumination festival. The holidays were an especially sparkly time in Preston Towne Centre this year, with all 55 Christmas street pole decorations refurbished and changed to LED lighting, as well as seven new additions. At the heart of the community, Central Park featured a new heart-shaped light display. In Downtown Cambridge, viewers could interact with the FUSE art project installed in Queen’s Square, which senses and responds to motion.

Opportunities to promote

Creative marketing shone a spotlight on local businesses. A Toque Magazine feature on Downtown Cambridge restaurants encouraged daytrippers to enjoy “a slice of Europe right here at home”. Approaching the holidays, the ‘Merry and Bright’ event in Preston encouraged businesses to decorate and host special events, entertainment or Taste of Preston events. This successful event was promoted through the #DiscoverPreston campaign, and organizers hope to expand next year and for many years to come.

Collaborative marketing was also key to success. Several BIA member businesses also participated in the Chamber of Commerce #YouGottaShopHereWR campaign, showcasing unique shopping, restaurants and services in Waterloo Region. The City of Cambridge also supported local businesses through its #OrderFromHome and #ShopFromHome campaigns and online map.

Opportunities to come together

Live music and outdoor events helped make supporting local businesses remain safe and enjoyable all year long, while adhering to public health restrictions.

In Hespeler Village, Queen Street East was closed every Saturday over the summer from Guelph Ave. to Tannery St. to make way for more seating, larger patios, and encouraging an open-air market feel.

Downtown Cambridge also closed part of Main St. all summer long to enable pedestrian access and expanded patios.

Even with the challenges of the past year, our Business Improvement Areas demonstrated that Cambridge’s core areas are not only wonderful shopping and dining destinations, but that they are places where people can come together, create memories and build community.

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