

# Strengthen <sup>the</sup> **CORE**

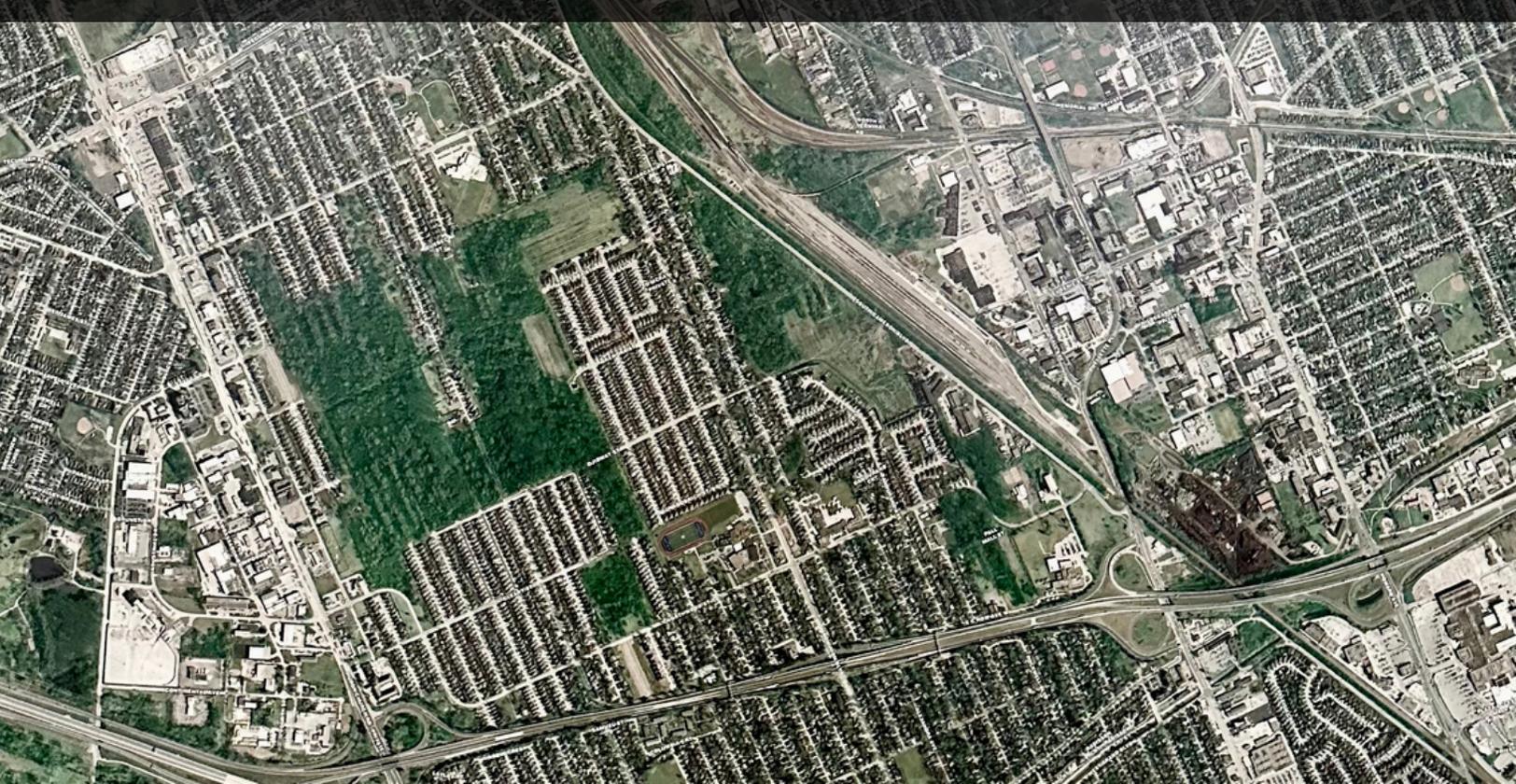
Downtown Windsor  
**Revitalization Plan**





**Safety and security don't just happen;  
they are the result of collective consensus  
and public investment.**

– Nelson Mandela





We are not blind to the issues facing our downtown. Make no mistake, we want to help people battling mental-health and addiction issues, but we are not going to let the behaviours often associated with people suffering these conditions to take over our city.

The **Strengthen the Core** strategy is about addressing safety concerns and implementing measures to encourage new investments in the core, while encouraging residents to locate downtown.

– **Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens**



City Council and the City of Windsor have laid the foundation for Windsor to be an attractive place for investment by being fiscally prudent, building amenities, forming partnerships, investing in growth, and setting the stage for Windsor's evolution to where we are today. **Windsor stands at an inflection point.** We have incredible economic opportunities and job creation on the horizon. We have put in the work to attract strategic investments and major projects that are changing the landscape of our city. This has **cemented our position as one of the most important communities to watch in Ontario and Canada**; A 'Revival City' with promising economic growth indicators.



While the economic indicators are favorable and the wind is at our backs, we acknowledge there is room for improvement. **Feeling safe in our community and enjoying a thriving downtown is one of those areas where we can and will do better.** Across Ontario and Canada, communities are facing increased challenges around mental health, addictions, and homelessness. This has significant impacts on our ability to create and sustain safe neighbourhoods that are the foundation of any thriving community. Municipalities cannot address the impacts on their own, and require additional resources and supports from upper levels of government.

Windsor City Council remains focused on the revitalization of downtown Windsor. The City has invested in infrastructure, buildings and amenities, arts and culture, festivals and events, tourism and hospitality, businesses and entrepreneurs, and formed key partnerships with private institutions. That complex work has generated so much positivity and excitement in the core. We continue to see new businesses, restaurants and entrepreneurs set up shop downtown, even as we continue to explore next steps for a new main branch for Windsor Public Library, the evolution of Festival Plaza, Civic Esplanade enhancements, and so much more. We have supported investments that have created the elements that have the potential to change the face of our downtown. The pieces are all here. The partners are all in place. **The time is now to launch this new strategy.**



# Action Items

In response to the challenges and concerns surrounding Windsor's downtown core, and in an effort to leverage the incredible opportunities that exist in the same area, Mayor Drew Dilkens led City Council in initiating the development of a **Made-in-Windsor solutions-oriented plan** to:

- **Improve Windsor's downtown image**
- **Help businesses, customers, and residents feel confident of their safety**
- **Connect individuals to appropriate supports where and when needed**

The in-depth development process included an analysis of **18 one-on-one interviews**; **2 focus groups** with residents, business and social service providers; **community survey with 3,500 respondents**; and written submissions. The results helped to inform the **7 proposed initial Action Items** that will support our goals:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>1 ] Safe Streets.</b>   | <b>5 ] Vibrant District.</b>  |
| <b>2 ] High Standards.</b> | <b>6 ] 'Our Downtown'.</b>    |
| <b>3 ] Healthy Spaces.</b> | <b>7 ] Stronger Together.</b> |
| <b>4 ] Place-Making.</b>   |                               |



# Safe Streets

Create and implement a **strong enforcement-focused strategy** to support safer streets.

Launch a new **'Made-in-Windsor'** police enforcement model focused on sustained high visibility and collaborative cross-sectoral response. Under this new model, **Windsor Police Service** will utilize all resources and approaches to promote lawful behaviour, and to disrupt and intervene in open drug use, property damage, petty crime, and disorderly conduct in the downtown core.

## **This new Policing and Enforcement Model will include:**

- Expand the **Windsor Police Service City Centre Patrol Team (CCPT)** by an **additional 12 sworn officers**. The CCPT will continue to operate inside their designated geographic area but under their own designated command to allow for enhanced focus and to improve resource allotment in the downtown.
- Assign a **Crime Analyst to the CCPT** to appropriately collect information and data which will drive both daily and strategic planning decisions to assist in directing resources when and where most needed. (i.e. prime shopping and entertainment times, evening establishment closing times, and larger event coverage).



- Appoint a **Community Liaison Officer** at a supervisory level to provide effective communication with stakeholders and facilitate regular community engagement.
- Implement a team approach between the CCPT, **Neighbourhood Officer Program**, the **Problem Oriented Policing Unit**, **Windsor's By-Law officers** and **311**, and other enforcement entities (i.e. AGCO, Windsor Fire & Rescue, Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services, etc.) to facilitate better communication, and to address crime, disorder, and quality of life issues.
- Expand and provide additional resources within the **Nurse Police Team**, **Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team**, and the **Patrol Outreach Team**, under the purview of CCPT. This coordination will provide the required daily services to the impacted population to minimize negative impacts on residents and businesses, while reducing the stress on health care facilities in the core.
- Implement Windsor's **Project SafeStreets** Pilot. Launched in August 2023 with four live cameras installed at private businesses in the downtown core. Partnership between business owners, the DWBIA, and ACS Security. Since its inception, partners have found a significant reduction in crime in the pilot project areas. As a result of real-time information, WPS has been able to react quickly to situations in traditionally unmonitored areas. They have found that the cameras offered a much-needed opportunity to provide immediate assistance to people who are in crisis and in need of emergency care.



- Dispatch a **mobile lighting and camera unit** to be deployed in known problem areas, to deter repeat criminal activity and its disruption on residents and business owners.
- Utilize **311** to improve the manner in which residents receive information and assistance, with 311 staff assisting community members in understanding available supports for individuals who are unhoused or experiencing a mental health and/or addictions crisis.
- Install additional **security lighting in alleys**, and in dark areas throughout downtown to deter criminal activity.
- **Discourage loitering** on medians and in front of empty storefronts and residential buildings in the downtown core.
- Increase the number of **Auxiliary Police** within parks and trains in the core.
- **Relocate city benches** away from vacant storefronts and buildings to discourage loitering and public intoxication.



## High Standards

Increase **enforcement of property standards** and **fill vacant buildings**.

- Appoint a **dedicated Ward 3 By-Law Property Standards Enforcement Officer** to lead enforcement in the downtown core and surrounding area.
- Engage all relevant City of Windsor departmental teams to **create or modify existing by-laws** to better encourage, through education and enforcement, maintenance of vacant commercial, residential buildings, and their lands.
- Increase engagement with the Downtown Windsor Enhancement Strategy and Community Improvement plan to encourage the maintenance and **updating of vacant residences and buildings** (i.e. façade improvements, space conversion, etc.).
- Review current CIP programs to **provide additional financial incentives** to existing and prospective downtown business owners/operators to update properties over the short-term (18 months).
- Increase **financial penalties** for unkept properties.
- Proactively contact landlords and property owners to inform them of available incentives to develop and activate their properties.



- Expand definition of “safety” to look at impact of buildings that are not at an adequate standard.
- Support enforcement of City by-laws relating to maintaining property standards (i.e. replacing broken windows, landscaping, or other property elements when there is non-compliance).
- Explore the possibility of making a **public list of properties that have orders against them**.
- Work with utility companies more effectively to identify vacant buildings and to **ensure utilities are turned on**.
- Make the City **grant application process easier** and approval time quicker.
- Enhance City-owned properties located in the core (i.e. parking garages, parkettes, etc.).
- **Increase the amount of garbage receptacles that deter rummaging**, and **improve the frequency of garbage collection** in the core.
- **Discourage loitering and panhandling** on medians in the downtown core.



## Healthy Spaces

Lobby upper levels of government to **support wrap-around relief programs** for vulnerable community members.

- Advocate to the federal and provincial governments for the funding required to **implement and expand social service initiatives** based on each government's area of responsibility and priorities, recognizing that municipal governments do not have the fiscal capacity to solve the challenges alone.
- Bring together local health leaders to determine the best approach to secure provincial funding for a **low-barrier, transitional care facility** where individuals experiencing an immediate mental health and/or addictions crisis can be provided with care tailored to their needs.
- Advocate for long-term provincial funding for Windsor Police Service and Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare to **help extend the M.C.R.R.T. and MHART programs**.
- Advocate for long-term provincial funding for Windsor Police Service and Windsor Regional Hospital to help make the **Nurse and Police Team pilot project permanent** and to extend its hours of operations.



- **Extend H4 hours of operation** to ensure people who are unhoused have a facility they can access prior to the opening of overnight shelters.
- Evaluate whether barriers exist for people experiencing homelessness to access H4 in its interim state, and **work to minimize any identified barriers** where possible.
- Continue work to implement strategies in the **Home Together: Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan**.



## Place-Making

Encourage people and businesses to **locate downtown**.

- Explore **additional housing options downtown** through the **Housing Solutions Made for Windsor** plan.
- Increase awareness and engagement with existing CIPs that have been established to support growth in the downtown core.
- As part of the current CIP and incentives review, identify additional and refine existing policy and financial incentives to encourage developers to **build downtown and/or to convert existing buildings** into residential units.
- Support the Downtown Windsor BIA in their efforts to **attract new businesses and anchor tenants downtown** (i.e. grocery stores and restaurants).
- Encourage employment opportunities downtown to create foot traffic.



# Vibrant District

Create vibrancy by **attracting and engaging residents and visitors**.

- **Collaborate with partners** like the Downtown Windsor BIA to facilitate partnership opportunities for existing and new events to **encourage post-event spillover into downtown businesses**.
- **Simplify the City Hall event approval process** and assess all event-related fees to help attract more event operators.
- Investigate options to **enhance/improve existing event venues** to attract a diverse range of events and activations, and to maximize event attendance.
- Continue making **improvements to streetscaping** and add **decorative lighting** to create a more welcoming atmosphere and provide additional visibility and a greater sense of safety downtown.
- Work with the DWBIA and existing landlords to **stimulate activation of currently vacant commercial spaces** (i.e. Pop-up stores and events), and to promote existing events and activities that draw residents downtown.
- Continue moving forward on Council endorsed projects including **Festival Plaza, Civic Esplanade, Legacy Beacon**, and **City Hall ice rink**.



## ‘Our Downtown’

Enhance community engagement and **implement a marketing strategy to celebrate and promote the core.**

- Work collaboratively with **Tourism Windsor Essex** and the **Downtown Windsor BIA** to create and launch a marketing campaign - ‘**Our Downtown**’ - aimed at sharing the positive stories and **highlighting the successes of the downtown core**, in the words and from the mouths of downtown community stakeholders.
- Profile businesses, business owners, landlords and residents in and from downtown.
- Build on existing community engagement with downtown stakeholders and community members to **make the downtown streetscape feel more welcoming and safer.**



## Stronger Together

**Convene a table** designed to improve collaboration, trust-building, and open communication between mental health and addictions service provider leadership, and all relevant stakeholders.

### **The table would:**

- **Identify opportunities** to enhance information sharing, address gaps, and limit duplication in services, increase efficiencies, and allocate resources effectively.
- **Strengthen coordination** between City staff, its partners, and regional leadership via the City's community safety and well-being infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities to **improve City processes** and **reduce red tape** to allow delivery partners to operate effectively.
- Create **public and transparent goals** and a process for ongoing evaluation.
- Expand **programs to meet client needs**.



## Next Steps

The Strengthen the Core: Downtown Windsor Revitalization Plan gives us the direction and support to focus first on safety, then cleanliness, and then on additional activation and investment for Downtown Windsor. The plan encompasses a multitude of objectives, of which some require careful consideration and planning before implementation. **In the coming weeks, City Council will receive a report from Administration seeking approval of an immediate action strategy to help roll out this plan.** That strategy will seek to address some of the urgent priorities and will identify the budget requirements to support the plan. The report will include a request for financing of the plan to proceed to a Budget Amendment process so that this vital work can begin immediately.

“This is an ambitious plan, and given Windsor’s incredible growth trajectory, it is the plan we need to support the development and evolution of our community right now. We have invested significantly over the years, there is a great deal at stake, and we must take the bold steps that are needed right now.”

– **Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens**



# Partners for Progress

The following stakeholders will be working together to begin rolling out the **Strengthen the Core** plan, **with new partners joining us as we move forward.**

City of Windsor  
Windsor Police Service  
Downtown Windsor BIA  
Invest Windsor-Essex  
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre  
Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island  
St. Clair College  
University of Windsor  
Windsor Regional Hospital  
Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare  
The Downtown Mission  
Welcome Centre for Women & Families  
Salvation Army Windsor - Centre of Hope

Art Windsor-Essex (AWE)  
The Capitol Theatre  
Windsor International Film Festival  
Windsor Symphony Orchestra  
Family Services Windsor-Essex  
Canadian Mental Health Association



# Connect With Us

**For additional information, please visit**

[www.CityWindsor.ca](http://www.CityWindsor.ca)

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# Strengthen the CORE



**What you do makes a difference,  
and you have to decide what kind of difference  
you want to make.**



– Jane Goodall