



IOWA CITY DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

# Mission Report

VOLUME

13

FISCAL YEAR

2024-2025

**DEAR STAKEHOLDERS**

From the ICDD President  
& Executive Director

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Dear Downtown Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the past year, 2024/2025, we are proud to share a snapshot of what has been a period of tremendous growth, transition, and momentum for the Iowa City Downtown District.

This year, we successfully introduced one of our most significant new direct service lines for our membership: the **Downtown Iowa City Ambassadors**. Their presence has made a marked difference in the vibrancy and welcoming nature of our district. At the same time, our focused advocacy efforts led to real wins, where collaboration and consistent communication helped bring meaningful change for our businesses and community.

There is an undeniable energy in the air with the **completion of the Dubuque Street streetscape**—a long-awaited and transformational investment in one of our major corridors. We are equally excited about the upcoming development of the **21 S Linn Street building**, a project that sets the stage for a key downtown corner to evolve with a design that embraces many ICDD priorities and will further activate and enhance our downtown core.

Much of this year was also dedicated to laying the groundwork for the newly adopted **ICDD 2025–2031 Strategic Plan**, a forward-thinking document that charts our course for the next five years and beyond. Through this work, we are now poised to begin the renewal of the **Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID)** for the next decade—a foundational tool that enables our continued progress. We are ready to launch this renewal with bold ideas and clear direction.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges we’ve navigated and areas of current uncertainty: significant shifts in the **real estate market**, **slower development cycles**, and broader **economic uncertainties**. Yet through it all, the strength and resilience of our downtown stakeholders have remained unwavering.

As we look to the future, we are confident and optimistic. We are ready to **expand, evolve, and embrace** what lies ahead. With a strong vision and the collective power of this community, we know the next decade will be one of opportunity, innovation, and continued progress.

With appreciation,

Betsy Potter  
Executive Director, Iowa City Downtown District

Wendy Zimmermann  
President, Iowa City Downtown District

**THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

President: **Wendy Zimmermann**, Get Fresh Cafe

President-Elect: **Jason Paulios**, Iowa City Public Library

Treasurer: **Angie Brown**, MidWestOne Bank

Secretary: **Tony Branch**, United Action for Youth

Past President: **Charlie Nusser**, Hands Jewelers

**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:**

MidWestOne Bank

GreenState Credit Union

Hills Bank

FLYCID

Chase Bank

Graduate Iowa City

University of Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition

iBev

Hilton Garden Inn

Pagliai’s Pizza

Performance Foodservice

Lasanky Gallery & Studio

MetroNet

Phelan Tucker Law LLP

RDG Planning & Design

Thompson & Co Salon Parlor

Lionheart Early Learning Center

Iowa Speedway

The Learning Grove Academy

McGrath Toyota of Iowa City

The Tuesday Agency

ImOn Communications

Phoebe Martin, Realtor, Blank & McCune

Heather Bright, Realtor, Lepic Kreuger

Riverside Resort & Casino

New Pioneer Co-op

OPN Architects

Tru Art Color Graphics and Bankers Advertising Company

Raising Cane’s

**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:**

University of Iowa

City of Iowa City

Better Together 2030

South of 6 SSMID

Greater Iowa City Inc.

Think Iowa City

**THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF:**

**Betsy Potter**, Executive Director

**Christopher Hunter**, Director of Marketing

**Joe Reilly**, Nighttime Mayor

**Katie Carpenter**, Director of Special Events

TRENDS & STATS

VISITATION DATA

May 3, 2024–May 3, 2025

DATA COLLECTED BY PLACER.AI

9.5 M

TOTAL VISITS FROM

1.2 M

VISITORS, RESIDENTS OF THE DISTRICT, AND EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE DISTRICT

3.3%

INCREASE FROM THE PREVIOUS PERIOD

6.5 M

VISITS WERE FROM PEOPLE WHO VISITED AT LEAST

13

TIMES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2024

HAD THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF VISITORS IN THE LAST YEAR, WITH

84,320 visits

TO THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT – HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER HOME FOOTBALL GAME WEEKEND

FACEBOOK REACH

609,737

INSTAGRAM REACH


216,909

WEBSITE VIEWS

453,000

IMPRESSIONS  
(HOW MANY TIMES A USER SAW A LINK TO OUR SITE IN SEARCH RESULTS)

14.6 M



\$128,709

WORTH OF DOWNTOWN GIFT CARDS WERE SOLD IN 2024, A 68% RATE OF REDEMPTION

# State of Downtown

DOWNTOWN IOWA CITY

AMBASSADORS

The first 11 months  
(June 1, 2024–April 31, 2025)

BIOHAZARD CLEAN UPS	1,051
BUSINESS CONTACTS	314
CLEANING BUSINESS CONTACTS	409
CURB LINES CLEANED	112,887
POWER WASHING HOURS	977
REFERRALS TO OUTREACH	37
SAFETY ESCORTS	11
TRASH COLLECTED (LBS)	191,041
WELFARE CHECKS	47



## Property Valuation



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
ASSESSED VALUE	\$140,533,080	\$153,507,710	\$153,004,700	\$190,165,843	\$190,854,850	\$224,903,730	\$239,674,450	\$290,940,151	\$294,403,012	\$288,294,447	\$295,572,983	\$360,961,310	\$364,100,600	\$403,004,942
TAXABLE VALUE	\$140,533,080	\$145,832,400	\$137,704,230	\$170,049,778	\$169,579,651	\$198,624,763	\$210,588,821	\$251,449,163	\$255,569,768	\$248,759,022	\$240,708,687	\$279,534,936	\$281,364,766	

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# Placemaking & Place Management

Having developed an established program for creative placemaking initiatives, many activations this year are now seasonal traditions, each seeing increases in investment and engagement. Our largest and most transformative effort was a pivot to Place Management for the Central Business District and parking facilities through a new collaboration between ICDD and the City of Iowa City, launching the Downtown Ambassador Clean & Safe Program. The focus on public space activation, stewarding a clean and hospitable downtown, and providing unique experiences through the District has become a key service and visible workload of the organization.



- Downtown Ambassadors Clean & Safe Program
- CREOS Los Trompos Installation
- Business Attraction & Retention programs: CoSign+, Property Evaluation
- Pickleball, Shuffleboard & Hopscotch Court
- Ian Hubert Mural
- BenchMarks Public Art Program
- Winter Lighting
- Protective Environments Lighting & Safety Program
- Northside Outside: Outdoor N Linn St Dining Space



# Marketing & Communications

Providing key support and engaging in new ways to communicate downtown's authentic attributes has been a driving force behind our marketing and communications agenda. This year, we invested heavily in strategic campaigns designed to support local businesses. These multi-faceted efforts included targeted outreach and marketing support for those directly impacted by the Dubuque Street construction project, the launch of [LocateDowntownIowaCity.com](#)—a new economic development website created in collaboration with the City of Iowa City to attract prospective businesses—and the designation of May as Legacy Business Month, celebrating downtown businesses that have been operating for over 20 years.



- Dubuque St Construction Business Support
- Launched [LocatedowntownIowaCity.com](#)
- X Marks the Arts: Free Week
- Legacy Business Month
- Retail Data Report
- Downtown Dish Podcast
- Social Media Campaigns



# Events

Over the past year, there has been an expansion to the lineup of high-quality, traffic-driving events, strengthening both beloved annual traditions like Farm to Street, Top Chef, etc., with exciting new additions like Scoop the Loop, 'Tis the Season Kickoff, and X Marks the Arts: Free Week. The jam-packed calendar now includes over 40 signature events designed to provide traffic-driving experiences to downtown businesses. From the intimate activations of Literary Pub Crawl to large-scale gatherings drawing tens of thousands at the summer Block Party, these events continue to enhance downtown’s vibrancy by providing meaningful connections between businesses and visitors.



- First Round — Monthly community happy hour
- Cookie Crawl
- Gallery Walk
- Seasonal Shop Crawls
- Free Week
- Top Chef: Downtown
- Scoop the Loop
- Farm to Street
- Downtown Block Party
- Taste of Iowa City
- Holidays
- Northside Oktoberfest
- Sidewalk Sales
- Puttin’ Around Downtown



# Up Next:

EMBRACE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

SSMID RENEWAL & EXPANSION

## Embrace Strategic Priorities

The ICDD adopted a new Strategic Plan this year, outlining the organization’s 4 strategic priorities for disproportionate emphasis over the next five years: Economic Vitality, Place Management, Leadership Partnership & Coordination, and Organizational Infrastructure.

With the new Strategic Plan now adopted, the work begins! The ICDD board, staff, and committees will develop milestones to monitor implementation of the plan and begin the first-year action steps and high-level metrics for each strategic priority.



See the full 2025-2031 Iowa City Downtown District Strategic Plan

1	Economic Vitality	2	Place Management	3	Leadership, Partnership & Coordination	4	Organizational Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Business/Property metrics &amp; data</li><li>■ Retail mix</li><li>■ Space utilization</li><li>■ Business succession</li><li>■ High Impact properties</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Impact of events</li><li>■ Clean &amp; Safe metrics</li><li>■ Activated space usage</li><li>■ Retail support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Annual policy agenda</li><li>■ Key issues tracking &amp; advocacy efforts</li><li>■ UI Healthcare campus</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ SSMID renewal</li><li>■ Staffing</li><li>■ Board and Committee realignment and engagement</li></ul>				

## SSMID Renewal & Expansion

The current term of the Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District (SSMID), the primary revenue source of the Iowa City Downtown District, is set to expire in 2026. The ICDD Board of Directors and staff are working toward a major petition drive to support a renewed 10-year term and an expanded boundary.

Over the 13 year history of the ICDD, having built a strong, recognizable brand, launched dynamic marketing campaigns, hosted hundreds of traffic driving events, built business support systems, implemented a comprehensive cleaning and hospitality program, and becoming a major advocacy voice for downtown priorities—these accomplishments have laid the foundation for continued impact and innovation in the years ahead. The 2025-2031 Strategic Plan established a framework for expanding our work—both in geographic growth of the assessment district and depth of services to the greater downtown community and its many diverse stakeholders.



Property owners:  
Learn more about the 2026-2036 SSMID renewal, and sign your petition today.

