



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

PRESTON STREET BIA  
OCTOBER 6, 2023





# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

## Notice is Hereby Given

That the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Preston Street Business Improvement Association (Preston Street BIA) will be held on Tuesday, October 17th, 2023 at Collabüro (499 Preston Street).

Please review the 2023 Annual Report in advance of the AGM. Questions can be sent to the Board of Directors by email at [social@prestonstreet.com](mailto:social@prestonstreet.com).

## Agenda

- 6:30pm** Arrival, Registration, Mingling Time
- 7:00pm** Meeting Commences
  - Motion to Open the Meeting
  - Introduction of the Board of Directors
  - Approval of the Agenda
  - Welcome Video
  - Councillor's Address
- 7:15pm** Guest Presentation, Somerset West Community Health Centre
- 7:30pm** Chairman's Report
  - Treasurer's Report, Presentation of 2024 Budget
- 7:45pm** Vote to Approve 2024 Budget
- 8:00pm** Annual General Meeting Called to a Close

# A MESSAGE FROM THE SOMERSET WEST COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



## AGM Guest Speakers

**Dawn Lyons, Director of Family and Community Health and Harm Reduction**

**Suzanne Obiorah, Executive Director**

Somerset West Community Health Centre is a multi-service centre that has been providing high quality health and social services to the West Centretown and Hintonburg neighborhoods for more than 50 years.

Our approach combines the provision of low-barrier primary health care, and mental health and addictions services. This includes a wide range of ethno-specific programs and health promotion and community development activities.

Our goal is to support people and communities to enjoy the best possible health and well-being. We work alongside community members to make our neighborhood and our city an even better place to live.

As an organization, we value our partnerships with the local business community and are pleased to be invited as guests to the Preston Street BIA's Annual General Meeting.



**We recognize that, like so many other communities across the country, our neighborhood is facing challenges related to growing homelessness, increasing mental health challenges and, of course, the devastating impact of the toxic drug supply and the overdose crisis.**

In the face of these challenges, we seek to work with our housed and unhoused neighbors as well as members of the business community to find solutions that meet the needs of those facing barriers and that foster the safety and well-being of the community as a whole.

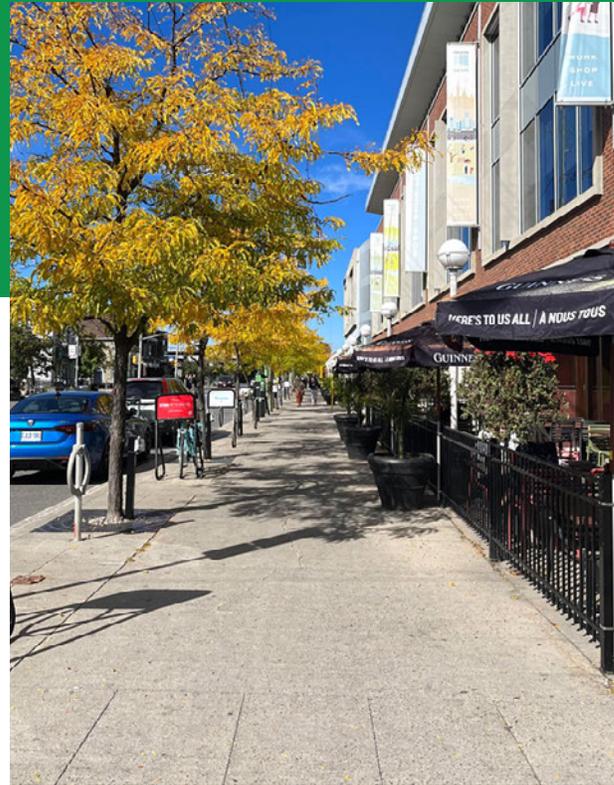
The Year in Review

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In 2023, the focus of the business community moved away from the pandemic and began looking towards a more stable future. Still, the year brought with it many new challenges for business owners, including the rising cost of doing business, labour shortages, and a slow return to normalcy for our downtown core and adjacent communities. With daytime population still hovering below pre-pandemic levels, the BIA Board of Directors was hesitant to increase the levy back to its pre-covid amount at the start of this year. Instead, the Board agreed to remain at eighty-five percent the pre-pandemic levy in 2023, all while delivering the same quality of programming and service that our members expect and rely on.

As an election year, 2023 brought forward a new Executive Committee on the Board. The BIA welcomed its new Chair, Steve Moffatt, Vice Chair, Marcus Filoso, and new Board members, Houry Avedissian and Daniele Cambareri.

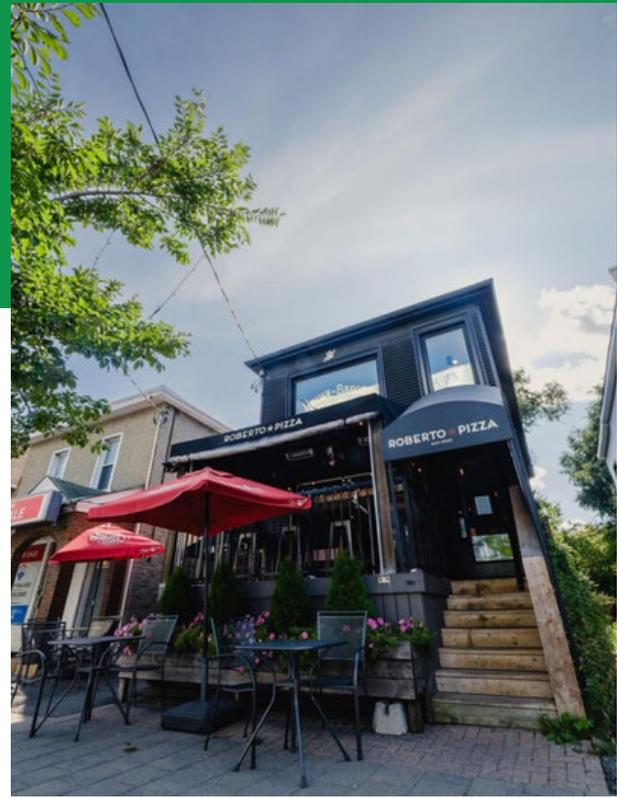
Entering into this new term, the efforts of the BIA Board and staff were focused largely on welcoming the community back to Little Italy. This year saw much needed repairs to our gateway signage, improvements in street maintenance and preparation for the Queensway Bridge Replacement on Preston. At the same time, the BIA worked with community partners



to bring our marquee events back to Little Italy, which included a very successful Ottawa Italian Festival opening weekend, Preston Street Bicycle Race and Tulip Festival.

Though the days of rapidly changing public health restrictions are now thankfully behind us, your BIA Board and staff continue to work diligently to provide community updates on pertinent topics, including construction, road closures, access to funding, and community safety. Along with maintaining frequent communications by newsletter, BIA staff set a goal to build a stronger presence on the street in 2023, strengthening relationships with our valued members.

The Preston Street BIA remains an active member of the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBA), allowing us to advocate for our members at all three levels of government.



Some highlights of our accomplishments in 2023 include:

- Two new community murals located at 125 Preston Street and 50 Beech Street,
- new Italian-flag tapered banners added to the street,
- continuation of our popular “People on Preston” video series,
- record traffic for the Ottawa Italian Festival on June 9-11,
- year-round graffiti remediation through Goodbye-Graffiti,
- replacement of the portal archway LED lighting system,
- a full retrofit of the Queensway “Little Italy” neon signs,
- removal and storage of the heritage mural project and overpass facets,
- formation of a new archway sub-committee,
- a new historical website feature.

## Looking Ahead

Each year, the Annual Meeting presents an opportunity to reflect on past accomplishments and to plan for the year ahead. With so much local development taking place within in our boundary, there has never been a more exciting time to be a resident, business owner or property owner in Little Italy.

We urge you all to be a part of this next year and engage with us as we strive to raise the bar once again. The Preston Street BIA looks forward to the year ahead, when we can continue to grow in new directions, invite the broader community to explore the offerings of Preston Street businesses, and continue to establish Little Italy as the best place to work, play and live in the National Capital Region.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS AND COMMITTEES





## STREETSCAPE

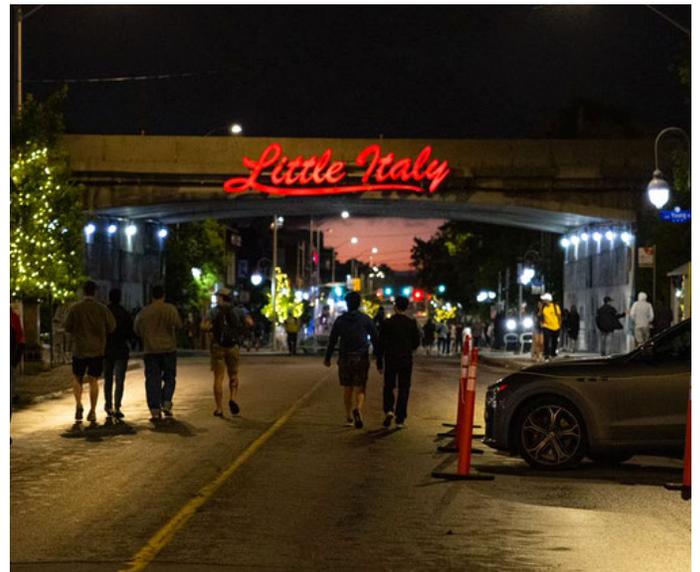
# NEON SIGN REPLACEMENTS

The Preston Street area is well defined by its glowing neon archway and gateway “Little Italy” signs. These unique features were paid for and are maintained by the Preston Street BIA and its members. Keeping these assets in good repair is a key priority of the BIA Board.

At the time that the 2023 budget was put into place, the Board was aware of the need to replace the green LED tube lighting on the Portal Archway at the south end of Preston Street. Knowing that the existing glass LED tube material was obsolete, the Board was prepared to replace the archway system in full. As a result, the Archway Maintenance budget was increased to \$15,000 in the approved budget for 2023.

In early 2023, lights on the overpass neon “Little Italy” signs began to fail. Given that these custom and complex gateway signs were over ten years old, the Board was diligent to explore all options related to repairing or replacing the aging LED systems.

As the “Little Italy” signs are much needed landmarks for the Italian Festival in June, the Board voted to approve retrofitting the LED interiors of the existing overpass signs in addition to replacing the archway system. Though working with a competitively priced supplier in Ottawa, it was expected that the cost of these



replacements, would exceed the existing \$15,000 archway maintenance budget. As a result, the Board voted to approve using the accumulated surplus to fund the Neon Replacement Project.

This project saw a full replacement of the existing archway LED lighting system with a new Aurora Flex “faux” neon system, and an interior retrofit of both of the overpass LED signs. The total cost of the neon sign replacements, including road closures and permits, totalled \$49,000.

SECOND

# ARCHWAY COMMITTEE

In February of 2023, the Board was approached by a group of member-stakeholders interested in forming a new Committee of the Board. The group proposed to use reserve funds for construction of a second portal archway at Preston and Albert, near LeBreton Flats. The Second Archway Committee would seek to meet with the Planning Committee, secure land for the archway at Preston and Albert, obtain engineering plans and oversee construction. On February 7, 2023, the Board voted to approve granting authority to the Committee to act on behalf of the BIA in meeting with the City of Ottawa Planning Department and any

parties deemed relevant or integral to establishing a plan for the location and construction of the second archway. On March 7, 2023, the Board voted to approve the Committee's budget of \$320,000.

## Committee Members

Angelo Filoso, Committee Chair  
Tony Zacconi, BIA Board Member  
Joey Frangione, BIA Board Member  
Houry Avedissian, BIA Board Member  
Joe Cotroneo, Committee Member  
Delio D'Angelo, Committee Member  
Lindsay Childerhose, BIA Staff



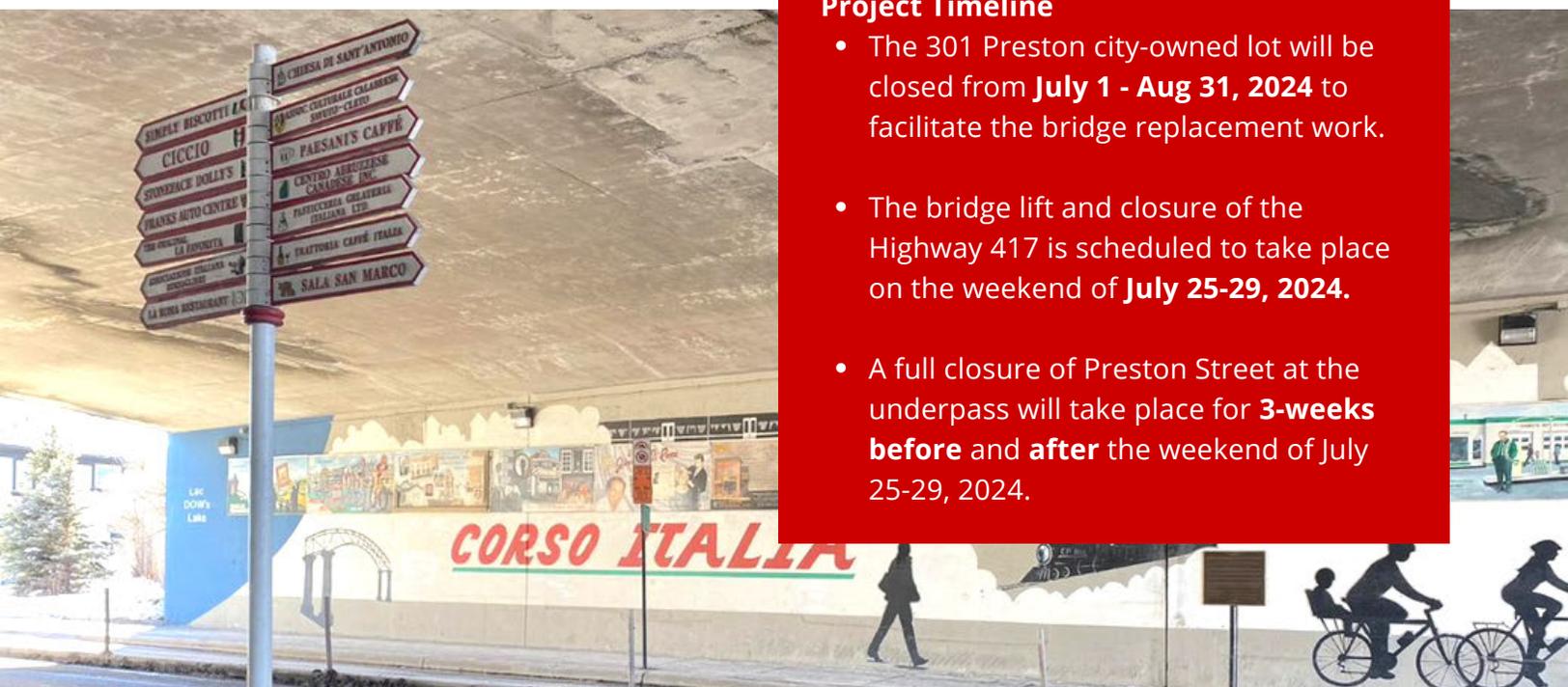
# PRESTON STREET RAPID BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

The Preston Street Rapid Bridge Replacement project officially began on June 23rd, 2023. Removal, lifting and replacement of the bridge is scheduled by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to take place in late July of 2024. However, the project will have impacts on Preston Street for one year leading up to the bridge lift, and for two months after. The Preston Street BIA has been working closely with the MTO to minimize the impact of the rapid bridge replacement on our members, to deliver timely information, and to preserve the unique, BIA-owned facets of the underpass.

The overpass neon “Little Italy” signs and mural panels were removed and taken into storage at Bayview Yards on Thursday, September 21st, 2023. The mural panels, overpass signs and blade signs will be safely stored for the duration of the bridge work. In 2024 when the new underpass is fully instated, the BIA will work with the MTO to replace the heritage mural project and overpass signs. The blade signs will be refurbished while in storage. More information about the blade sign refurbishment program will be made available to the members in 2024.

## Project Timeline

- The 301 Preston city-owned lot will be closed from **July 1 - Aug 31, 2024** to facilitate the bridge replacement work.
- The bridge lift and closure of the Highway 417 is scheduled to take place on the weekend of **July 25-29, 2024**.
- A full closure of Preston Street at the underpass will take place for **3-weeks before and after** the weekend of July 25-29, 2024.

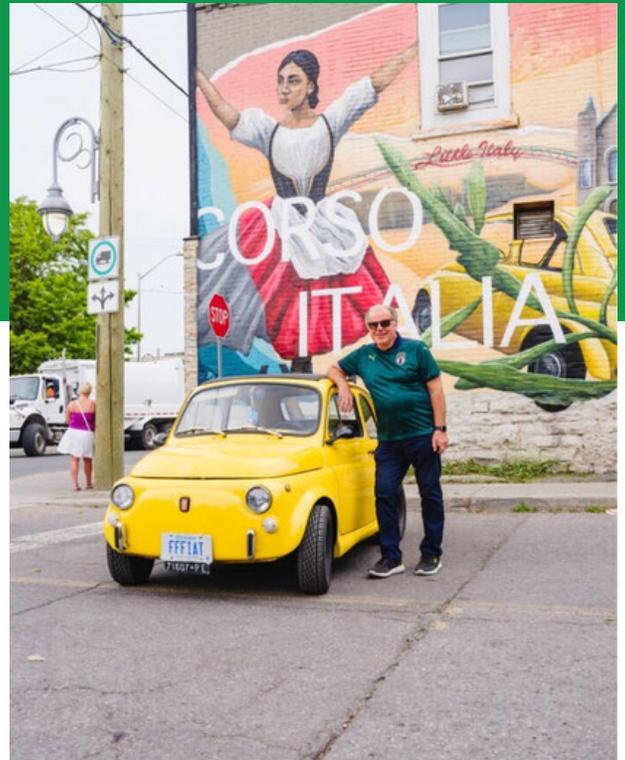


# CORSO ITALIA COMMUNITY MURAL

Little Italy's newest piece of public art, the Corso Italia Community Mural, was painted in May of this year by local artist Ryan Smeeton. Located at 125 Preston Street, the mural was commissioned by the Preston Street BIA and funded, in part, by the City of Ottawa. The artwork is meant to bring together key elements of both local and broader Italian heritage and to tell the story of the Preston Street community through it's landmarks.

The Italian-themed mural features cultural symbols including a traditional tarantella dancer, olive branch and bright yellow fiat. The artwork also features some more literal connections to local history, including the Corso Italia Portal Archway, St. Anthony's Church and Chappie's Lunch - the first Italian Restaurant on Preston Street. A special thank you to Trina Costantini-Powell for identifying the culminating features of the Corso Italia Community Mural.

As part of the 2023 Ottawa Italian Festival, an official mural launch was held on June 11th. Onlookers were delighted to find that the painted yellow fiat had also made an appearance in real life, alongside a group of young tarantella dancers in traditional costume. The group was joined by members of the community, St. Anthony's Church congregation and Councillor Ariel Troster.



## 2023 AT A GLANCE

# MARKETING REPORT

With festivals across the city back in full swing, the marketing team had a very active year programming the street and bringing back well-anticipated events.

### Ottawa Italian Festival

The 2023 Italian Festival brought with it some change. For the first time in 49 years, the festival's main events took place one week earlier than their usual date on Father's Day weekend. The Preston Street Criterium remained a closing feature of Italian Week on Sunday, June 18th. BIA staff and festival partners worked hard to communicate this change to attendees. Despite the date change, the Italian Car Parade and FCA Ottawa Ferrari Festival saw record turnout on Friday and Saturday of the main event weekend, with festivalgoers lining the street to watch these incredible car displays. This year, the BIA had an improved presence on the street during the event, with two new and unique installations for attendees to engage with. As always, the BIA was there to facilitate member participation in the festival. Through the BIA's special event permit, restauranteurs once again extended their patios into the street. In our 2023 Member Survey, 77% of respondents reported increased revenues during the Italian Festival weekend.



The 49th Annual Preston Street Bicycle Races also saw incredible attendance on the north end course on Father's Day. The BIA will continue to honour our commitment to alternating the Bike Race route between the north and the south end of the street annually.

Moving forward, we will continue to work closely with our partners to make the Italian Festival one of Ottawa's largest events. Next year, on the festival's 50th anniversary, we look forward to bringing the street to life in new ways as the event returns to its original date on Father's Day weekend.

### Street Improvements

Revitalization and beautification of the street remains an ongoing goal of the BIA Board. To announce this year's Italian Festival, the street was lined with tree



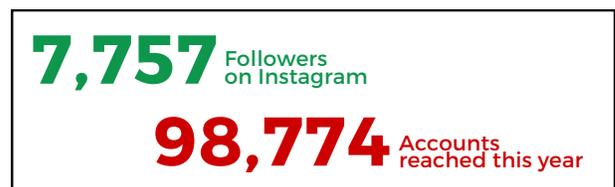
guard signs and new Italian flag banners were added. This summer also saw the completion of two new community murals at 125 Preston Street and 50 Beech Street.

### Website

The marketing team continues to prioritize a consistent, accurate and engaging marketing strategy. BIA staff work diligently to ensure that our website remains up to date and is information accessible. We strive to celebrate all achievements in the neighbourhood by posting press releases on our website and sharing them through various media channels. The marketing team continues to honour the heritage of the area; this year, the BIA launched a new local landmarks page that includes historical writeups for all of the Postcards from the Piazzas sculptures, heritage mural panels and other public art on Preston.

### Social Media

With a redefined social media strategy, our channels saw record engagement across all platforms this year. This included continued promotion on TikTok and through Instagram Reels, and the introduction of LinkedIn to our marketing plan. Continued partnerships with local influencers and media sources resulted in an over thirty-percent increase in followers on Instagram, helping us reach the milestone of 7,000 followers. Curating an audience of engaged consumers remains a top priority of the marketing team.



# OTTAWA ITALIAN FESTIVAL 2023 JUNE 9-11







# FINANCIAL REPORT

In alignment with our mandate to improve and promote the Preston Street commercial catchment area, BIA resources are aimed at complementing the work of the nearly 270 member businesses and property owners in our boundary.

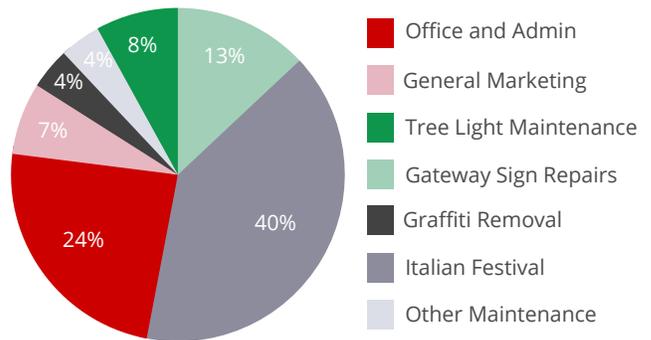
## Administration

In 2022, our administrative costs were 30.6% of expenditures, down from 62% in 2021. The Ottawa BIA average is 55%. Currently, office and administration accounts for just 24% of 2023 year to date spending. With a shared office space and minimal staff, we remain confident that that our current staffing and overhead give us the necessary capacity to remain effective and to create value and outcomes for members.

## Accumulated Surplus

Our accumulated surplus continues to be held for future strategic projects. In 2022,

## Breakdown of 2023 Expenses



the Preston Street BIA posted an annual surplus of \$40,919. This left a total accumulated surplus of \$360,700 moving forward. In 2023, we worked to build on our momentum with the support of our surplus while absorbing what we could into our operating budget. Due to necessary improvements to our gateway signage, we expect a deficit of between \$20,000 and \$30,000 after year-end reconciliations are complete. In 2024, 44% of the reserve fund will be brought into our operating budget for the Second Archway Project.



## Presenting the 2024 Budget

Your BIA Board has worked hard to develop a budget that meets your service and programming needs for the year ahead. With the cost of supplies for events, road closures and street decor rising substantially from 2022 to 2023, the proposed budget will allow the BIA to deliver the services, programs, advocacy, and promotion that members expect and rely on. At the same time, the Board is aware of the challenges faced by our members, including the rising costs of doing business. In our 2023 Member Survey, 67% of respondents indicated that inflation was one of the most pressing issues for them as business owners. With this in mind, the Board agreed to keep the levy at a reduced rate when planning for the year ahead. The levy will be increased by 5% up to 90% the pre-pandemic levy in 2024. This small increase will support the return of our annual programs, maintain our vibrant main street and allow us to deliver on our mandate.

## Key Highlights

- The levy will be increased by **5%** from **85%** to **90%** the pre-pandemic levy amount in 2024.
- A **\$160,000** contribution from the reserve will be added to BIA revenues to fund pre-construction costs for the Second Archway Project.
- The event budget for Italian Festival in 2024 reflects actual spending from 2023, which saw increases in the cost of road closure and security personnel, paid-duty police, and increased sponsorship amounts to maintain event quality amid supply shortages and price increases.
- A budget of **\$20,000** has been included in the Maintenance and Operating budget for archway electrical maintenance and any costs associated with the bridge replacement in 2024.

Please see the draft budget on page 19.

	2023 BUDGET	2023 YTD ACTUAL	2024 BUDGET
<b>Revenues</b>			
Total Levy	\$391,000.00	\$390,771.00	\$414,000.00
Supplementary Assessment		\$1,852.00	
Remissions		\$152.00	
Grant Revenue			
Other Revenue		\$1,317.00	
My Main Street - Acc		\$25,848.00	
Bilingual Ottawa		\$2,700.00	
City Graffiti Grant		\$12,500.00	
Grant Revenue Reposted to 2022		-\$40,338.00	
Total Grant Revenue		\$2,027.00	
Contribution from Reserve			\$160,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$391,000.00</b>	<b>\$394,802.00</b>	<b>\$574,000.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Office and Administration	<b>Note 1</b>	\$142,000.00	\$93,248.00
Marketing and Events	<b>Note 2</b>	\$150,000.00	\$184,428.00
Maintenance and Street Décor	<b>Note 3</b>	\$89,000.00	\$74,800.00
Second Archway Project	<b>Note 4</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$381,000.00</b>	<b>\$352,476.00</b>
			\$170,000.00
			\$163,500.00
			\$80,500.00
			\$160,000.00
			\$170,000.00
<b>Note 1 - Office and Administration</b>			
	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 YTD Actual</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
Compensation	\$100,000.00	\$62,871.00	\$120,000.00
CPP Employer Contribution	\$6,400.00	\$3,402.00	\$6,400.00
EI Employer Premiums (D&O's Insurance)	\$1,560.00	\$1,385.00	\$1,600.00
Cellular Phone(s)	\$1,950.00	\$771.00	\$2,000.00
Audit/Legal Fees	\$3,200.00	\$0.00	\$3,200.00
Insurance Premiums	\$2,500.00	\$3,264.00	\$3,500.00
Employee Medical Benefits	\$4,250.00	\$1,605.00	\$4,250.00
Hospitality, Meetings and AGM	\$1,000.00	\$318.00	\$1,000.00
Corporate Memberships	\$5,500.00	\$6,631.00	\$7,000.00
Building/Facilities Rental	\$11,000.00	\$9,952.00	\$14,000.00
Parking	\$200.00	\$590.00	\$3,000.00
Signage (Admin)	\$190.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Office Supplies and Printing	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Computer Peripherals and Software	\$2,000.00	\$2,004.00	\$2,000.00
Late Payment/Interest Charges	\$0.00	\$334.00	\$50.00
Conferences and Conventions	\$2,000.00	\$121.00	\$2,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$142,000.00</b>	<b>\$93,248.00</b>	<b>\$170,000.00</b>
<b>Note 2 - Marketing and Events</b>			
	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 YTD Actual</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
Professional Service - Website	\$3,100.00	\$1,313.00	\$3,500.00
General Advertising and Promotion	\$3,700.00	\$2,061.00	\$5,000.00
Donations and Sponsorships	\$10,000.00	\$17,500.00	\$15,000.00
Tulip Festival	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
My Mainstreet Q4 Expenses	\$0.00	\$2,017.00	\$0.00
Italian Festival			
Italian Car Parade	\$13,000.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00
Ferrari Festival	\$25,000.00	\$82,000.00	\$35,000.00
Preston Street Bicycle Race	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00
Road Closure/Security and Police	\$45,000.00	\$54,207.00	\$55,000.00
Advertising and Animation	\$20,000.00	\$20,299.00	\$15,000.00
Meetings and Hospitality	\$200.00	\$31.00	\$0.00
Italian Festival Total	\$118,200.00	\$156,537.00	\$135,000.00
La Vendemmia	\$10,000.00	\$0	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>	<b>\$184,428.00</b>	<b>\$163,500.00</b>

\*

<b>Note 3 - Maintenance and Street Decor</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 YTD Actual</b>	<b>2024 Budget</b>
Electrical Repair and Neon Maintenance	\$19,000.00	\$49,058.00	\$10,000.00
Graffiti Management and Street Cleaning	\$14,500.00	\$9,584.00	\$14,500.00
Treelight Maintenance (Nutrilawn)	\$31,000.00	\$0.00	\$35,000.00
Hydro for Treelights	\$3,000.00	\$1,488.00	\$3,000.00
Overpass Expenses	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Signage and Banners	\$6,500.00	\$2,627.00	\$3,000.00
Artwork (Murals)	\$0.00	\$12,043.00	\$5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$89,000.00</b>	<b>\$74,800.00</b>	<b>\$80,500.00</b>

<b>Note 4 - Second Archway Committee</b>			
Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35,000
Construction Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$160,000.00</b>

\*Grant revenue paid out in 2023 for expenses incurred in 2022.

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



**Steve Moffatt,  
Chair**  
Waterford Property Group



**Marcus Filoso,  
Vice Chair**  
Aquilina Urban Properties



**Lauryn Santini,  
Treasurer**  
Santini Gallery



**Houry Avedissian**  
Ha2 Architectural Design



**Joey Frangione**  
Preston Hardware



**Sabrina Mtanos**  
Avenue North Realty



**Claudio Lepore**  
St. Anthony's Soccer Club



**Shane Olsen**  
The Heart and Crown



**Tony Zacconi**  
Mercato Zacconi, Sala San Marco



**Daniele Cambareri**  
DynaCorp Construction



**Ariel Troster**  
City Council Appointee

## BIA STAFF



**Lindsay Childerhose**  
Executive Director



**Katy Morassutti**  
Marketing and  
Communications Coordinator

# DID YOU KNOW?

As a BIA member, you can influence what happens in your commercial district by providing feedback, getting involved with your BIA Board, Board committees and annual meetings.

BIA CONTACT INFO	MEMBER INFORMATION
<p> <a href="http://www.prestonstreet.com">www.prestonstreet.com</a></p> <p> 343 Preston Street, Office 1177</p> <p> 343-291-1178</p> <p> <a href="mailto:info@prestonstreet.com">info@prestonstreet.com</a> <a href="mailto:social@prestonstreet.com">social@prestonstreet.com</a></p>	<p>For all member information, visit <a href="http://prestonstreet.com/members">prestonstreet.com/members</a> or sign up for e-newsletter.</p> <p>Connect with us on social media:</p> <p> @littleitalyottawa</p> <p> @littleitalyottawa</p> <p> @prestonstreetbia</p>

To sign up for our newsletter, please send an email to [social@prestonstreet.com](mailto:social@prestonstreet.com). You'll receive our updates featuring community news, development information, road closure notices, small business resources, funding opportunities and notice of events in Little Italy.