



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

FOUNDATION FOR MEANINGFUL IMPACT



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- Rosemary Thompson, Board Chair
- Suzanne Valiquet, Vice Chair
- Bryan Chandler, Past Chair
- Mischa Kaplan, Governance Chair
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- Grace Xin (Member at Large)
- Nina Kressler (Member at Large)
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- Councillor Jeff Lieper (Observer)

CITY OF OTTAWA DELEGATE

• Sheilagh Doherty (City of Ottawa, Economic Development)

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Zachary Dayler, Executive Director
- Melanie Anderson, General Manager
- Victoria Williston, Manager of Communications
- Jeanne Matthiss, Manager of Business Integration
- Samson Ojo, Property Manager





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MANDATE

THE CITY OF OTTAWA PROVIDED A SEVEN-POINT MANDATE FOR THE BMDA IN JUNE 2023, THESE INCLUDE:

01.

Maintaining the ByWard Market District streetscape and public realm spaces to a level of service higher than the City of Ottawa Level of Service Maintenance Quality Standard.

02.

Enhancing the resident and visitor experience within the District.

03.

Hosting special events and activities of both city-wide and national significance and promote the ByWard Market District and Parkdale Market experience to residents and visitors.

04.

Advocate for initiatives that improve community safety and well-being within the ByWard Market District Operational Boundary and Parkdale Market Operational Boundary.

05.

Advocating for investment within the ByWard Market District Operational Boundary and Parkdale Market Operational Boundary in accordance with the City of Ottawa's ByWard Market Public Realm Plan or other area objectives as determined by the Member (City Council) or the Board.

06.

Supporting and advocating for property, small business and entrepreneurial interests within the ByWard Market District Operational Boundary and Parkdale Market Operational Boundary, including the availability, accessibility and promotion of local foods, producers, goods, artisans and creators through the public markets.

07.

Embedding in all initiatives a focus on climate change adaptation, the advancement of social equity, inclusion and diversity, and celebrating and promoting the cultural and built heritage tradition of the ByWard Market and Parkdale neighbourhoods.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Public space, and by virtue of that, public markets, are critical to the vitality and health of a city. It is in these spaces that we find commonality, we celebrate, we party... we even disagree, but for as long as humanity has been organizing communities - we have carved out this "space."

The ByWard Market District is where the City started almost 200 years ago - it is Ottawa's original public space. The role of the ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA), in partnership with interested parties, is to revitalize this historic space. As I reflect on our first year of operation as the BMDA, I want to acknowledge the unique opportunity I've had to observe and learn from the contributions of the former organizations—Ottawa Markets and the ByWard Market Business Improvement Area. These two groups, which championed the enterprising spirit of the ByWard Market, have since

amalgamated to form what is now the "District Authority". In doing so, they established a central agency dedicated to stewarding meaningful transformations aimed at enhancing, improving, and revitalizing this historic and dynamic part of our Nation's Capital. The past work of these two groups, and their willingness to evolve in pursuit of public space for all, is a true nod to collaborative city building.

In its inaugural year, the BMDA built a successful foundation that included expanding our staffing resources, as well as recruiting and onboarding a new Board of Directors to lead strategic planning and governance. Part of this work was launching our Business Advisory Committee and Public Markets Working Group. In addition, we invested in critical beautification and maintenance projects throughout the area, such as heritage lighting refurbishment, tree maintenance, decorative lighting, and increased plaza and sidewalk cleaning.

Additionally, investment was made in expanding partnerships to support and enhance event activations in ByWard - with the intent of drawing visitors and residents to the District, building the case for future visits, and returning spenders. Events like the Tulip Festival, Cinco de Mayo, FlyMarket, Caravibe, Day of the Dead Festival, and Winterlude anchor our regular daily outdoor market offering from week to week, and season to season. As the organization grows, we can expand this offering into other areas, like recurring artist performances, local walking tours, and events of national significance, like Canada Day.

Within our first Annual Report – *Foundation for Meaningful Impact* - you will find a variety of insights and metrics that we are tracking as we build the case for future investment. This data was collected during our first year of gathering information as an organization, primarily through Environics and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Our goal in 2024 was clear - set benchmarks to measure progress. The future is promising for public spaces, and as we advance through the next four years of our strategic priorities, we are confident in our ability to strengthen the case for continued investment.

Finally, none of this work would be possible without the remarkable dedication of this team, the businesses, and the residents who contribute to the vitality of this District every day. Their ongoing commitment and passion for the ByWard Market are what sustain its unique character and enduring legacy.

I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors—volunteers who have generously offered their time, insight, and steady guidance throughout the year. Their leadership has been instrumental in shaping the direction of the organization, and I am deeply appreciative of their unwavering support.



None of this work is possible without our incredible team, the businesses, and the residents who show up every day and who wear their love for this incredible District on their sleeves.





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YEAR IN REVIEW

METRICS AND TRACKING

The ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA) 2024 Annual Report showcases a baseline year for the corporation. Establishing a strong foundation allows the BMDA to build year-over-year to inform, support, and adapt to the trends and needs of a complex district.

The BMDA uses various data collection methods, such as surveying, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), and Environics, which help track the general visits and customer profiles of those visiting and living within the ByWard Market District.

Throughout 2024, it has become apparent that the District is an economic engine with one of the highest property tax bases and assessed property values, and as such, ByWard has funded much of the city's growth.

283

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES



LOADING ZONES ADDED

2,794

SQUARE METERS OF PUBLIC SPACE CONVERTED TO COMMERCIAL PATIO SPACE

\$100,000

SPENT IN MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

\$130,00

INVESTED IN
BEAUTIFICATION
AND PAGEANTRY

11

HOURS DAILY OF EXPANDED PUBLIC WASHROOM ACCESS (5:00 A.M. TO 12:00 A.M.)

536

VENDING PERMITS ISSUED

191

DAYS OF EVENT PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATIONS \$11 million

IN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

22 million

DISTRICT VISITS

254,406

WEBSITE VISITS

159

OTTAWA SIGN ILLUMINATIONS

TOP-LEVEL YEAR IN REVIEW BY THE NUMBERS	NUMBER(S) / METR
District Assessed Value	\$1,103,885,229
Residential Properties	1,069
Multi-Residential Properties	13
Commercial Properties	283
2024 Foot Traffic (Number of Visits)	22,000,000
Revitalization Investment (All Levels of Government)	\$11,000,000
Additional Grants and Funding Agreements	\$670,000
Traditional Marketing & Advertising Investments	\$100,000
Social Media Followers Increase	11,000
Social Media Combined Impressions	4.5 million
Days of Event Programming and Activations	191
Mural & Painting Activations	40
Parking Spaces within BMDA Boundary (15 min / paid combined)	1,805
Loading Zones	15

MARKET PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATIONS

- 191 days of events, festivals and markets
- Launched inaugural ByWard Winter Market
- Logged 22 million annual visits

The ByWard Market is a unique district with numerous functionalities, with a major component being an exceptional gathering space for residents and visitors of Ottawa. Whether an artisan market, live performance event, or multi-day festival, the BMDA hosted 191 days of programming throughout the area. Essential to 2025 will be the continuation of the consistent, predictable event programming, allowing more residents and visitors to confidently plan their days and visits to the ByWard Market.



2024 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Launch of Business Collaboration Events and Ottawa Board of Trade Partnerships

The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) led quarterly sessions for the business community, focused on important updates and presentations on key topics that impact the District. The BMDA partnered with the Ottawa Board of Trade on numerous downtown revitalization events and networking sessions to enhance and strengthen the organization's brand awareness.



46th Winterlude

918.151 TOTAL VISITS

The 46th annual Winterlude festival brought seasonal joy to the ByWard Market with vibrant programming and family-friendly fun. With reduced funding support, in 2024, the BMDA proudly took on the full responsibility for delivering the experience, investing directly in our community by hiring local talent and creators. Highlights included a whimsical interactive colouring book inside Gallery 55 by a local artist, a "Drawn Together" installation on the main plaza, and live demonstrations by ice and wood carvers. From hosting the beloved

Kiwanis Bed Race to offering traditional horse and carriage rides from Cundell Stables, every dollar spent stayed in the District.



Canadian Tulip Fest Partnership

887.307 TOTAL VISITS

For the first time, the ByWard Market was the Official District of the Ottawa Tulip Festival, reigniting a successful partnership after almost a decade! Full of fun, new activations, this partnership was a great addition to the opening of the summer season. Collectively, the BMDA and tulip festival event organizers operated a return shuttle service between the Dows Lake location and the ByWard Market, seeing 3,418 discounted trips.



Cinq à sept: A ByWard Concert Series

AVERAGE VISITATION DURING SERIES 75.359.04 | TOTAL VISITS: 1.431.821.71

The ByWard Market's recurring music series, presented as a paid partnership between the ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA) and the Ottawa Music Industry Coalition (OMIC), brought live local talent to the streets every Thursday evening from May through October. Running from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.—a classic cinq à sept—the series transformed the market into a vibrant hub of sound and community connection. This collaboration allowed the BMDA to guarantee fair wages for participating artists, directly supporting Ottawa's creative economy.



Salsa Sundays!

AVERAGE VISITATION DURING SERIES 83.177.91 | TOTAL VISITS: 998.134.94

A sure indication of the successful use of public space is people dancing! Taking place every Sunday, June through September, Ottawa came out to participate in a free dance lesson. This activity provides a great way to build community, celebrate and have a bit of fun!







Canada Day Festival

212,403 TOTAL VISITS (3 DAYS)

Over the Canada Day festival weekend, York Street came alive with a vintage market and vibrant street food festival, celebrating the heart of the city where it all began nearly 200 years ago. Despite bouts of rain, Ottawans showed up in true Canadian spirit to enjoy great food, lively music, and the warmth of community. The event offered a festive mix of nostalgia and flavour, with local vendors and musicians adding to the charm.

Barket: A Pet Market

71.747 TOTAL VISITS.

A pet lover's paradise, this year's BARKet was a hit, drawing crowds of furry friends and their humans for a day of tail-wagging fun. The pet-centric market featured a dog fashion show, adoptable puppies from a local rescue, and professional pet portrait sessions. Unique vendors with items like "Pup-cuterie" offered treats and accessories made just for pets, adding to the festive atmosphere. From start to finish, it was a joyful celebration of Ottawa's vibrant pet community.





Day of the Dead Festival

249.506 TOTAL VISITS (3 DAYS)

The Day of the Dead Festival is one of the fastest growing in Ottawa. Promoting the richness of Mexican culture through art, gastronomy, music, and dance, appealing to the senses of all ages. This festival, a partnership with YZETA Meeting & Event Management, is an opportunity to experience a piece of Mexico in the heart of Canada.





Inaugural ByWard Winter Market

2.805.354.29 TOTAL VISITS.

Launching in 2024 and carrying through 2025, the inaugural ByWard Winter Market aimed to offer something for everyone. Each week, from Thursday to Sunday, visitors were invited to wander through an outdoor market featuring vendors offering unique local crafts, holiday treats, and seasonal delights. With twinkling lights, holiday décor, and cozy vibes, the ByWard Winter Market became the perfect place to shop, eat, and celebrate winter!



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PLACEMAKING AND BEAUTIFICATION

- \$130,000 invested in District beautification projects
- 5,812 meters square of added pedestrian space
- 101 tree wells cleaned, and 76 floral planters maintained

The BMDA has enhanced and added standards, above the City of Ottawa's baseline, for the maintenance of the ByWard Market and assets within its boundary. In partnership with the City, the aim is to provide an enhanced level of service and support to its residents and businesses. To deliver on this component of our mandate, the BMDA partners with numerous service providers, including LaFleur de la Capital, a renowned landscaping service within the national capital region.



Heritage Pole and Tree Refurbishment

Over the summer months, the BMDA did an account and painting refresh of the 86 heritage lighting poles throughout the District. This work also included an initial cleaning of the street trees and wells, as these assets received a significant amount of wear and tear over the years.



Planting and Hanging Basket Program

The BMDA established a seasonal planting program for existing and newly installed infrastructure, adding to the District's overall beautification. Anchored at 55 ByWard Market Square, the BMDA used local vendors to install 48 floral arrangements around the historic market hall. In addition, 28 floral planters were maintained seasonally, first for the Canadian Tulip Festival, and then again with in season florals for the summer, fall and winter months.



Bin Patrol and Cleanliness Committee

The BMDA and the City of Ottawa collaborate on an increased cleanliness program, which includes ploughing and snow removal services in the District. As a designated priority zone, the downtown area receives regular attention from the City, while the BMDA provides additional care. This past season, our enhancements included 42 extra plaza cleanings, as well as targeted snow clearing around pedestrian areas to keep public spaces safe and accessible.



ByWard: A Living History

Discover on the second floor of the ByWard Market Building the story of the ByWard Market District in this historic art exhibit showcasing its past, present, and future. Through archival images and community voices, explore how this iconic neighbourhood has grown—and where it's headed. Educational and inspiring, the exhibit invites reflection on the Market's role in community life and placemaking, highlighting its importance as both a gathering space and a symbol of shared identity.

Mural Painting

In 2024, the BMDA supported 40 painting and mural projects led by local artists. The BMDA completed, amongst others, two large-scale road murals and a massive 22-panel colouring book, as previously mentioned. The arts community is a central partner in the District's revitalization effort and assists in bringing added excitement to our public space and buildings.





William Street Transformed into Enhanced Public Space

A key part of the ByWard Market District's revitalization is the transformation of William Street (Segment II), between George and York Streets, into an enhanced public space. This vital entry point into the Market is seasonally reimagined with seating areas, vendor stalls, and cultural programming—including events like Cinco de Mayo, Canada Day, and ByWard Barket. As an important corridor connecting Rideau and Clarence Streets, William Street draws visitors into the heart of the Market and strengthens its role as a welcoming, animated public space. While the pilot removes 17 paid on-street parking spots, it creates space for 20 vendor locations that support local entrepreneurs.

On busy weekends—such as during the Day of the Dead festival—this vibrant area can welcome up to 250,000 visitors, reinforcing its place as a dynamic, inclusive destination in the city. William Street Segment II will be the first project implemented under the City of Ottawa's Public Realm Plan, transforming this key corridor into a permanent public space, with construction set to begin in 2026.



MARKETING, BRANDING, AND COMMUNICATIONS

- \$100,000 invested in advertising
- Increase of 11,000 followers across Instagram and Facebook
- 4.5 million combined social media impressions

ByWard is on the tip of almost everyone's pen or fingers regularly featured in local media and broader discussions about the downtown core—evident in coverage like the Ottawa Citizen's Fixing ByWard series. While media stories offer valuable visibility, they also vary widely in tone and impact. The BMDA is actively exploring how to track and interpret these narratives, recognizing their influence on public perception.

Beyond media monitoring, the BMDA continues to strengthen its overall communications strategy. In partnership with creative agency Banfield, we are launching a District Awareness Campaign designed to reintroduce residents and visitors to the ByWard Market's vibrancy. This includes developing strategies to promote both BMDA-led events and those organized by local businesses.

In addition to our revamped newsletter, which features A/B testing to optimize engagement, we leverage our owned media channels—such as our website, where we share informative blogs and other useful content for the public. Our weekly events carousel on social media keeps the community informed and engaged, while our LinkedIn strategy highlights our organization's accomplishments, partnerships, and community-driven initiatives to showcase the positive impact we're making.

As we move through 2025, our focus is on refining our messaging, building on lessons learned, and ensuring that the ByWard Market remains a resilient, inclusive, and celebrated destination for all.

Of our communications efforts in 2024, a number of pieces stand out:

Enhanced District Signage Program

Throughout the ByWard Market District, numerous structures were installed to announce and promote upcoming events, pageantry themes, and help with wayfinding. These efforts are paralleled in the anchor heritage property at 55 ByWard Market Square through digital information screens.

Weekly Social Media & Newsletter Promotions

Our weekly social media event promotion carousel was created in response to valuable feedback from local businesses. Designed to keep the community informed, this carousel highlights upcoming events, markets, and activities happening throughout the ByWard Market District, providing a consistent and engaging way for businesses to promote their offerings to our significant audience. It's an essential tool for fostering connection and visibility within the district.

In conjunction with our social media event carousel, our weekly newsletter offers a focused spotlight on nightlife and arts/culture events, alongside a featured business segment that highlights a different restaurant or retail establishment each week. The business spotlight, which was introduced in response to suggestions from the Business Advisory Committee based on public feedback, enhances visibility for the ByWard Market's diverse offerings, driving engagement and promoting the vibrancy of the district.

MEDIA COVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS















NEWSLETTER(S) AND OUTREACH

The BMDA has established three primary newsletter channels.

Sharing the ByWord

3.045 SUBSCRIBERS

A weekly newsletter focused on the ongoings in the District and its accomplishments and is targeted to a sign-up / visitor audience.

Business Insider

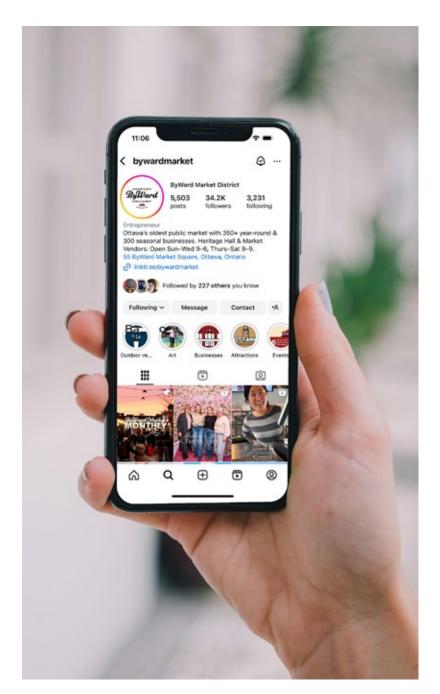
507 SUBSCRIBERS

A quarterly newsletter for the business community that shares upcoming opportunities, details on forthcoming work, and insights into the local economy. Supplementary communications are issued as needed to relay time-sensitive or critical information outside of the regular distribution schedule.

Vendor Times

259 SUBSCRIBERS

A monthly newsletter that shares information, updates and opportunities for our vendor communities. Additional communications may be sent periodically to convey important updates that arise between scheduled editions.



Social Media

COLLECTIVE REACH: 2,480,885

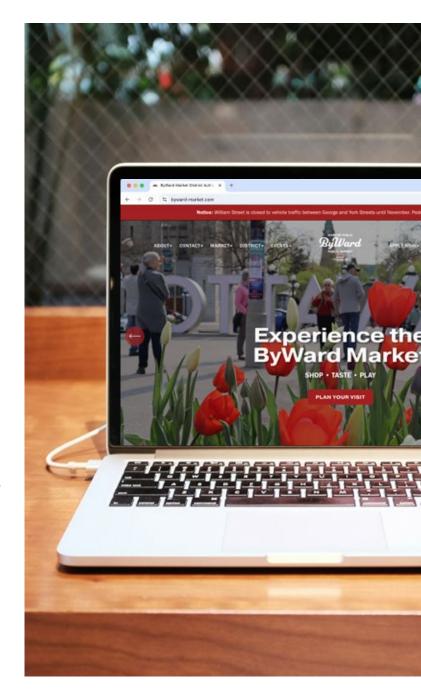
Social media, specifically Instagram and Facebook, is one of the primary communication channels for the BMDA. Our goal is to showcase the District in a holistic way that resonates with a wide range of demographics, and it's important to keep in mind that these channels are primarily focused on serving our audience. We achieve this by creating our original content, as well as collaborating with influencers and creative marketing firms to ensure a vibrant and inclusive representation.

The average engagement rate with content in 2024 is 4.33% (Instagram) and 5.27% (Facebook)

Website

TOTAL VISITS: 254,406

The website for the BMDA is a central landing spot for all the programs, bookings, and information that is required to work with the organization. The website also serves as a home of event information, news articles, promotions, and photos. Collectively, the website serves a dual purpose as the primary booking tool for the Public Market vendors, events and activities, but also as a source of information for residents and visitors.



As part of the visual rebrand from Ottawa Markets to the BMDA, the organization refreshed its logo to better reflect the new identity.

The update includes distinct logos for the public market and the corporate brand. Anchored by the image of the historic market hall, the new design removes the red text in favour of a more versatile, neutral palette with a pop of colour. This refreshed look is more adaptable across different applications and works seamlessly with partner branding, limiting clashes with elements like promotional posters, staff uniforms, and merchandise.



Previous Version



Updated Version



Updated Version (White)



Winter Variation



Pride Variation



Capital Music Week Variation

MEMBERSHIPS/PARTNERSHIPS/TRAINING

Shine On Program

All new seasonal staff of the BMDA participate in Ottawa Tourism's Shine On Academy training to ensure they uphold a high standard of service and deliver exceptional customer experiences. This program equips them with in-depth knowledge of Ottawa's tourism landscape and reinforces best practices in hospitality.

St. John Ambulance First CPR, AED & Naloxone Training

The BMDA ensures basic first aid training for all seasonal, contract, and full-time staff to ensure they are prepared to respond confidently in emergency situations. Given the complex needs of the District and the high volume of visitors, this training is a key part of maintaining a safe and responsive environment.

Partners



























ADVOCACY & SUPPORTS

- \$11 million in Provincial funding to support ByWard Market Revitalization Plan
- 11 hours added daily to public washroom access
- 4 additional loading zones

The BMDA supports three distinct interested party groups: residents, business and property owners, and visitors. Ultimately, the mandate of the BMDA is focused on enhancing the visitor experience within the ByWard Market District ensuring a welcoming and vibrant area for all. As a placemaking organization, The BMDA focuses on city making that fosters cultural, economic, and social connections. While there are numerous organizations advocating for small businesses, the BMDA's role is to prioritize community well-being, safety, inclusivity, and a space where all can thrive.

ByWard Market Public Realm Plan Funding - Phase 1

In 2024, the Province of Ontario and the City of Ottawa negotiated the new Ontario-Ottawa Deal, outlining \$197 million over three years to support various City initiatives. The deal will see \$11.8 million spent on enhancing the ByWard Market District through revitalization projects on William Street and ByWard Market Square.

Increased Public Washroom Access

Through a funding partnership with the City of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario, the BMDA has extended its public washroom access. The washroom pilot, which began in 2024 and

became fully operational in February 2025, aims to improve community access to essential services. Located in the heritage market hall at 55 ByWard Market Square, the washroom facilities, including the accessible washroom, is now open to the public from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., an increase of 11 hours daily. This extended hours pilot not only addresses community access challenges but also provides measurable outcomes, including the number of users during these extended hours (data forthcoming). The initiative is designed to enhance public convenience and support the broader goal of fostering a more inclusive and accessible environment in the ByWard Market District.



Downtown Champions Table & Night Life Commission

The BMDA holds a seat on the Ottawa Board of Trade Downtown Champions Table, and the City of Ottawa's Nightlife Council. Both bodies are focused on advancing an advocacy agenda that improves the vitality, safety, and economic resilience of Ottawa's core by supporting business growth, enhancing public spaces, and championing a vibrant, inclusive downtown experience. Tied to the downtown action agenda, the plan calls for \$500 million in downtown investment, targeting an increase of 40,000 residents.

Addition of Loading Zone(s)

The BMDA, in partnership with the City, has addressed a number of loading zone issues, specifically within the George Street and York Street area. In 2024, the BMDA was able to add four additional loading zones to facilitate easier business deliveries and limit the potential for infractions.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- Facilitated \$25,000 in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Grants
- Supported creation of Block Leader Program
- Make the Right Call Distribution

Downtown Safety Group

The BMDA is an active participant in the Downtown Safety Group. Meeting quarterly and led by our partners at the National Arts Centre (NAC), the group meets to discuss ongoing issues and solutions to community safety with various interested parties such as the Rideau, Centretown and Downtown BIAs, and the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).

As part of this work, the BMDA participates in the OPS Neighbourhood Operations Centre outreach days and community meetings. These engagements provide an opportunity to connect directly with residents, service providers, and community partners, allowing us to raise awareness of the BMDA's role and offer an additional level of on-the-ground support. By being present and responsive in these spaces, we help ensure that concerns affecting the visitor experience are heard and addressed, reinforcing our commitment to building a safe, welcoming, and vibrant District for all.

Block Leaders Program

The BMDA has been an in-kind supporting partner of the Ottawa Inner City Health Block Leader Program. Through the provision of our Heritage Hall located at 55 ByWard as a base of operations, the block leader program helps to circulate and support with connecting individuals in need with the services available to them. The program also assists with the morning opening procedure in the core of the District.

Make the Right Call

The BMDA updated and reissued *Make the Right Call*, a quick reference guide originally distributed by the Ottawa Police Service. This practical tool was designed to help businesses and community members in the ByWard Market District know who to contact in various situations—whether it was theft, a medical emergency, or a mental health concern. Updated to reflect current needs, *Make the Right Call* aimed to reduce confusion, and support a more coordinated, informed approach to public safety in the District.

MISSION STATEMENT

Stewarding ByWard Market District to enhance its economic, cultural, and social vibrancy, honouring its heritage and driving transformative community engagement.

COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT

The ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA), as a guardian of the vision, economic prosperity, and vibrancy of the historic ByWard Market District, is committed to ensuring that this shared community treasure stands as the City's prime destination for both locals and visitors. Leveraging its commercial, residential, heritage, and public market profiles, we aim to foster unique year-round destinations at both the ByWard and Parkdale Markets where individuals can indulge in local produce, goods, and a diverse array of services.

Building upon our rich heritage, we champion the importance of local food sustainability. Embracing an entrepreneurial spirit, the BMDA is devoted to curating an innovative retail and outdoor vending mix, ensuring our public spaces resonate with both local significance and national and international pride, and collaborating with partners to invigorate and enhance our market spaces for all to enjoy.

