

The Evolving Role of BIAs in Shaping Communities



Toronto
Downtown West



About Toronto Downtown West BIA

The Toronto Downtown West is a neighbourhood of experiences and home to Toronto's Entertainment District. The area comprises some of the city's most iconic cultural landmarks including:

- CN Tower
- Scotiabank Arena
- Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts
- Steam Whistle Brewing
- Ripley's Aquarium of Canada
- Canada's Walk of Fame
- Metro Toronto Convention Centre
- Rogers Centre
- Roy Thomson Hall
- Princess of Wales Theatre
- Royal Alexandra Theatre
- Factory Theatre
- TIFF Lightbox
- Canadian Broadcast Corporation
- Bell Media

It is also home to the best national talent including the Canadian Opera Company, the National Ballet of Canada, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Toronto Blue Jays, Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Raptors.



What is a BIA?

Business Improvement Area

a designated geographic area within a city or town where local businesses work together to improve the area's economic and social environment.



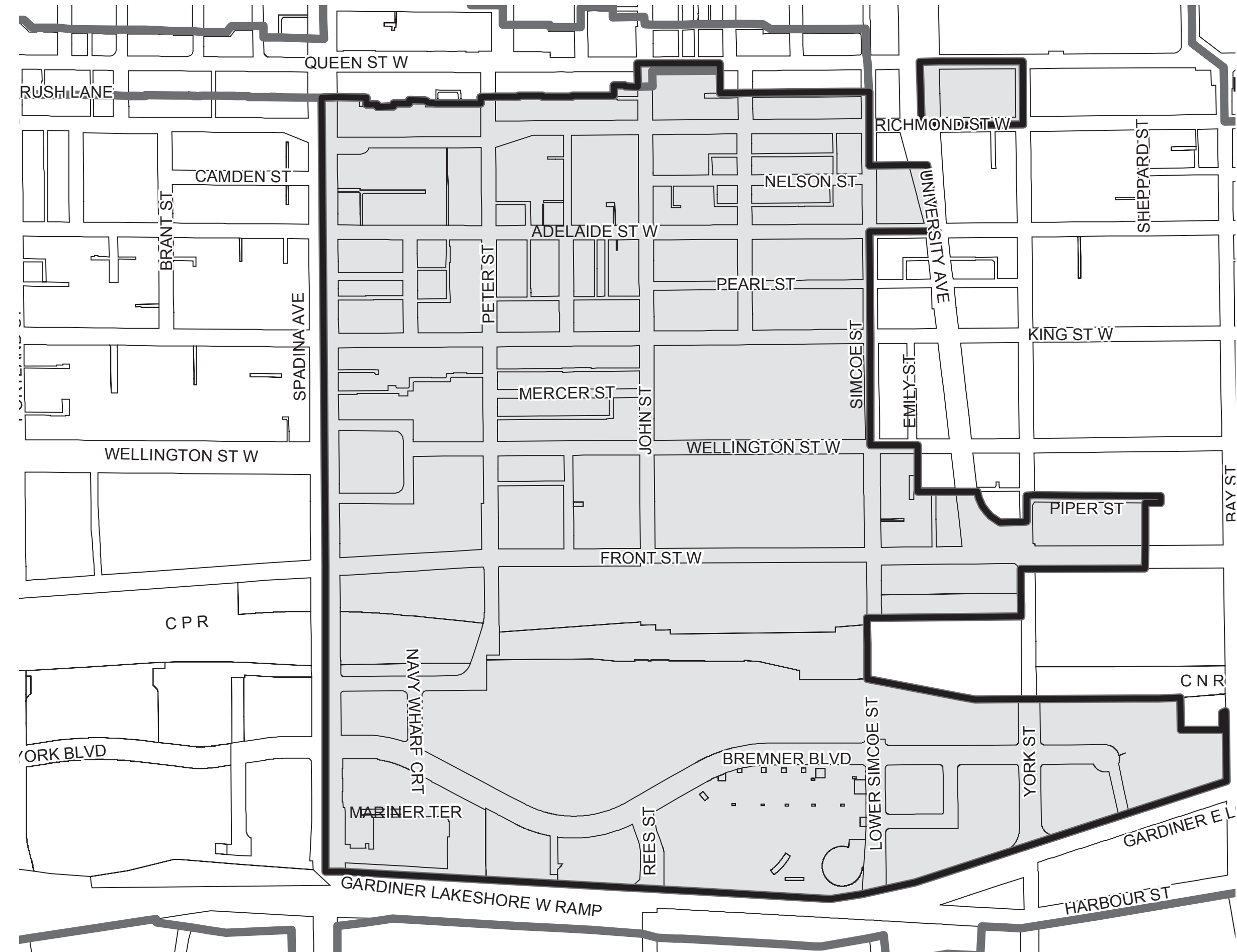
2023 Community Challenges

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Litter & graffiti
- Encampments & homelessness
- Property vacancies
- Refugee crisis
- Traffic
- Road closures & Construction
- Metrolinx infrastructure work
- Transit
- Accessibility
- Tree pits
- Vandalism & property damage
- Car jackings
- Violent crime
- Shelter capacity
- Under-resourced City services
- Park maintenance
- Congestion
- Events & crowds
- Lack of public washrooms
- Labour shortage
- Inflation & interest rates
- Development
- Population growth
- Low office occupancy
- Transportation of goods & services
- NIMBYism
- Emergency response times
- Occupational hazards
- Mental health
- Bike lanes
- Snow and ice removal
- Pollution & environmental issues
- Protests & demonstrations
- Technological advancement
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Sustainability
- Small business support
- Night economy
- Organized crime
- Drug & human trafficking
- Food insecurity

The Evolution of Our District – 2008

2008:

- Residential Population: 2,500+
- Working Population: 2,000+
- Annual Visitors: 18,000,000+



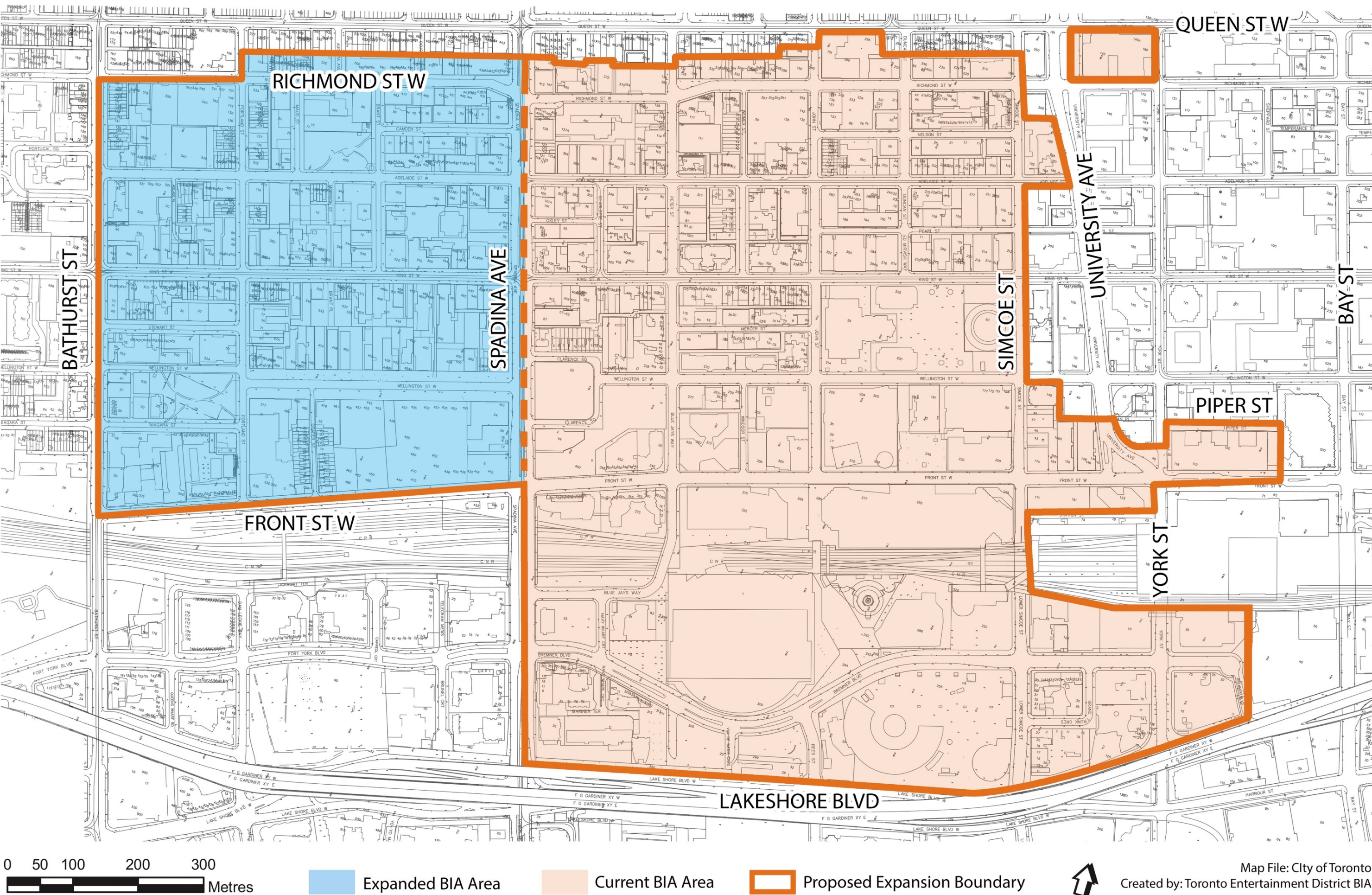
The Evolution of Our District – 2023

2008:

- Residential Population: 2,500+
- Working Population: 2,000+
- Annual Visitors: 18,000,000+

2023:

- Residential Population: 35,000+
- Working Population: 115,000+
- Annual Visitors: 24,000,000+



The Evolution of Our District – Population Increase

33%

Visitor Population Growth

1,300%

Residential Population Growth

5,650%

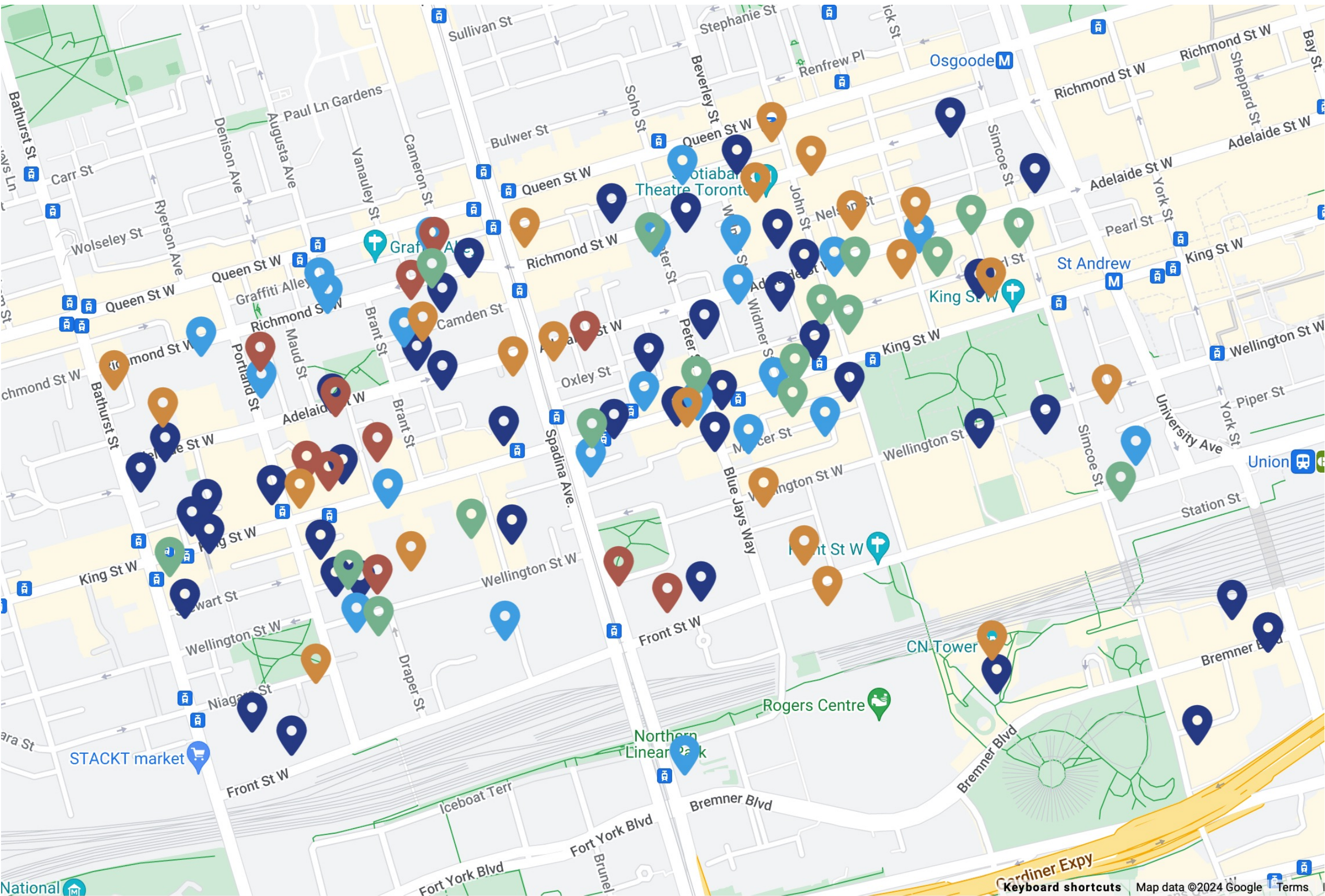
Working Population Growth

The Evolution of Our District – Development Projects

117

Total Development Projects

- Completed: 44
- Submitted: 22
- Approved: 17
- Appealed: 11
- Under Construction: 23



Growth & Development

Growth and Development Framework



Development Review Checklist



6 Development Review Checklist

The Development Review Checklist is an aid to assist in the evaluation of the benefits inherent in a proposed development. The criteria listed is not meant to replicate the City's own criteria when reviewing applications; rather, the area of interest is on a proposed development's potential to contribute to the Framework's Key Areas of Focus: the pedestrian realm and open space, streetscapes, and uses at grade. As such, the checklist focuses on the ground level and lower floors of the subject development as well as its relationship to the surrounding context.

Development Review Checklist

Date: _____	Brief description of existing public realm and site conditions _____
Address: _____	_____
Developer: _____	_____
Type of Application: _____	Brief description of application _____
Application No.: _____	_____

- 1 **Contribution to a Complete Community**

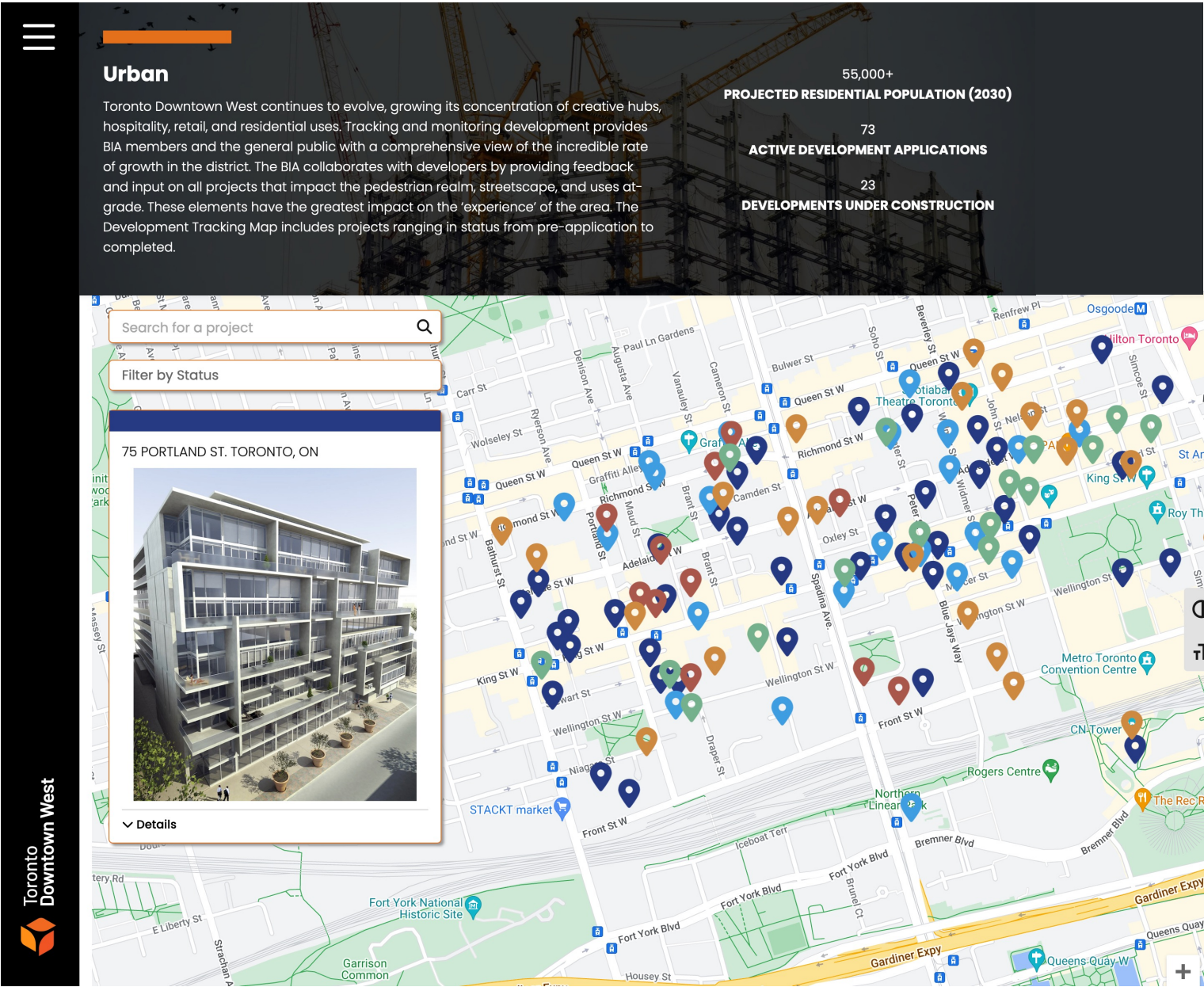
 - ☐ Providing a contribution to the experience, diversity and viability of uses that make up Downtown West's overall character
- 2 **Street-level Activation**

 - ☐ Inclusion of contiguous/continuous retail/commercial uses
 - ☐ Maximization of building transparency/visual porosity as viewed from the public right-of-way
 - ☐ Supportive of potential uses that engage pedestrians
 - ☐ Provision of a flexible structural layout that accommodates non-residential adaptive re-use over the building's lifespan
 - ☐ With respect to commercial spaces: provision of an exterior lighting plan
 - ☐ With respect to commercial spaces: provision of a signage plan/guidelines
- 3 **Public Realm Contribution**

 - ☐ Streetscape enhancement elements/Contribution to the public realm consistent with DWBIA's vision and design principles
 - ☐ Provision of Public Open Space (i.e. park or square)
 - ☐ Provision of Privately Owned Public Space
 - ☐ Art/Cultural Heritage contribution
 - ☐ Building setbacks at-grade that accommodate flexible outdoor uses
 - ☐ Inclusion of mitigating measures that provide for pedestrian comfort (canopies, wind screens, building setbacks and stepbacks)
- 4 **Technical**

 - ☐ Discrete locating/Screening of at-grade utilities (gas, hydro, electrical, and other public or privately owned utilities)
 - ☐ Convenient and safe access to bicycle facilities
 - ☐ Discrete siting and screening of loading/garbage areas
 - ☐ Loading, pick-up, drop-off, and parking access facilities do not impact on character or potential use along primary building/streetscape frontages

Development Tracking Map



BIA Focus Areas – 2008

- Promotions
- Capital Improvements
- Urban Planning
- Advocacy
- Community events
- Strategic partnerships



2023 Community Challenges

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BIA Focus Areas – 2023

- Promotions
- Capital Improvements
- Urban Planning
- Advocacy
- Community events
- Strategic partnerships
- Growth & Development
- Transportation & Transit
- Accessibility & Mobility
- Street Involved Activity
- Homelessness
- Mental Health
- Supportive & Affordable Housing
- Safety & Security



What Now?

1. Updated Strategic Plan

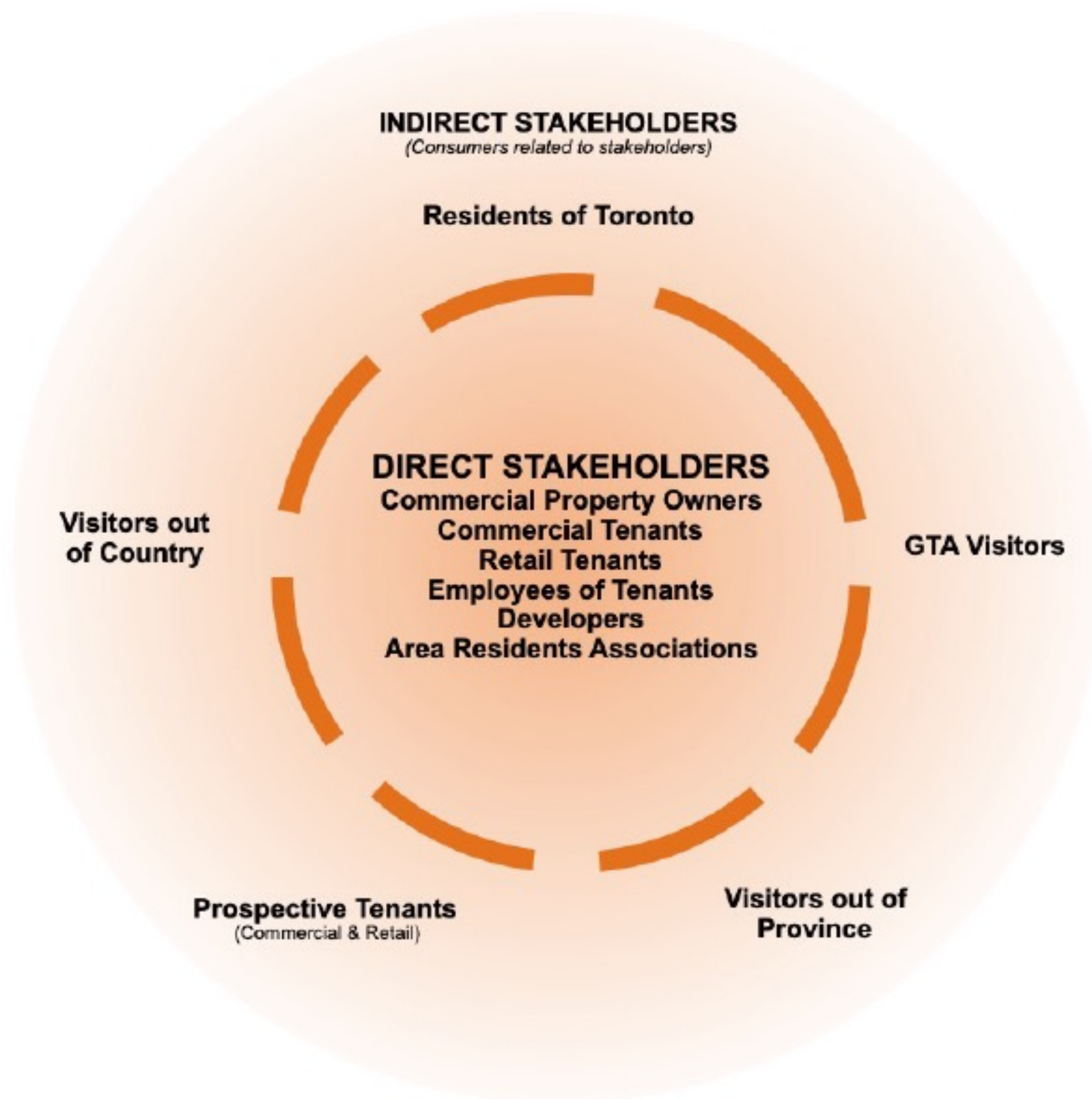


Our Strategic Plan

Our strategic plan identifies four priorities which aim to enrich businesses and the community:

- **Promote**
- **Advocate**
- **Collaborate**
- **Enhance**

The plan outlines key objectives which are advanced through the BIA's efforts and partnerships with numerous stakeholders.



2. Established Strategic Partnerships



Strategic Partnerships

BIA Members



All Levels of Government



Downtown BIA Alliance



Community Stakeholders





3. Shared Value Creation

2023 Community Events

- De-escalation Training
- The Black Experience in Canadian History
- Community Safety & Wellbeing
- BIA Summer Social
- BIA ArtWalk Launch & Social
- Safeguarding Against Organized Crime
- A Safe Night Out Information Session



Advocacy

- Community Safety & Wellbeing
- Transportation, Transit & Mobility
- Supportive & Affordable Housing
- Commercial Taxes
- Addictions & Mental Health
- Visitor Economy



Community Safety & Wellbeing

- Dedicated Safety & Security resources
- Formation of Safety & Security groups
- Established Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Officer Program





4. Measure Success



Demonstrating Value



MESSAGES



We work together with the BIA to address pertinent issues impacting our membership and community. Through our collective efforts in tackling concerns, such as securing affordable, supportive housing, and essential resources for those facing crisis situations, we foster a positive impact on the neighborhood and strengthen the unity within our community.

Ausma Malik, First Deputy Mayor of Toronto

WATCH VIDEO

HIGHLIGHTS



19 Million+

Annual Visitors



115,000+

Working Population



55,000+

Projected Residential Population (2030)



35,000+

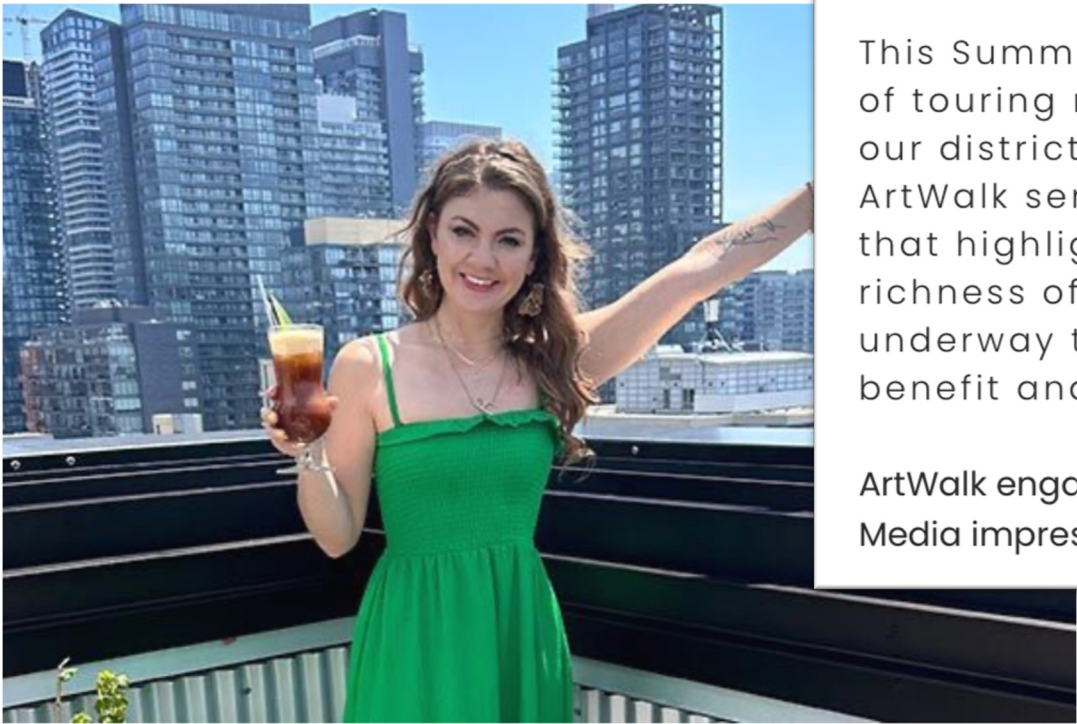
Residential Population



Member Features

Our Member Features highlighted the stories behind local businesses and were amplified through social media. These stories were enhanced with the addition of podcast content.

Views of member features: 4,426
Promotional reach on social media: 263,331



Online Promotions

Contesting and influencer partnerships through our social channels increased the visibility, engagement and reach of our promotional content. We worked with a variety of influencers as well as OCAD U Live, a student lead media program to promote ArtWalk, FanExpo, TIFF and many businesses. We also received extensive online coverage through articles on our site, and media features in the Toronto Guardian, Now Toronto, BlogTO and more.

Total Online Reach: 2 Million +
Total Contesting Reach: 132,575



ArtWalk

This Summer, we launched ArtWalk 2.0, a new way of touring more than 70 pieces of public art in our district through augmented reality and audio. ArtWalk serves as a platform and tourism product that highlights the artistic talents and cultural richness of our neighbourhood. Plans are underway to include more experiences that will benefit and promote our member businesses.

ArtWalk engagement: 1,420 unique app users
Media impressions: 17,447,083



Toronto Downtown West

Winter Newsletter 2024



Toronto Downtown West Receives TABIA Awards for Community Safety & Innovation

The BIA's efforts were recognized at the 2023 TABIA Award Nights on December 5, 2023. Mayor Olivia Chow and Maureen Sirois, President of TABIA, presented the BIA's Director of Safety & Security, Mike Josifovic, with the Community Safety & Well-Being Award, as well as the Innovation Award for the ArtWalk Experience.

The Community Safety & Well-Being Award represents the BIA's efforts to foster safety and well-being through community sessions, regular Safety & Security Group meetings and our partnership with the Toronto Police Service

Key Takeaways

1. Ensure strategic plan is relevant
2. Leverage strategic partnerships
3. Prioritize shared value
4. Demonstrate the value of BIAs



Questions?



Thank you!

Visit us at YourExperienceAwaits.ca

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