



# DOWNTOWN SCHENECTADY IMPROVEMENT CORP.



Annual Report  
2023-2024

## Office Staff

**Maureen Neufeld,**  
Executive Director

**Gail B. White,**  
Office Manager

**Sarah Lokker,**  
Marketing Coordinator

## Outdoor Team

**Carney J. McGuire,**  
Director of Operations

**Shahkee Miller,**  
Team Leader

**H. Antoine Boyd**

**Tonia Hopkins**

**Lewis Irizarry**

**Himkleys Romero**

## Board of Directors

**Heather Peterson,** President  
Peterson, Campoli &  
Associates CPAs

**Austin Fisher,** Vice President

**Ray Legere,** Secretary  
Legere Holdings/  
Armory Studios NY

**Andrea Cortelyou,** Treasurer  
Highbridge Management

**Michael Burns**  
Mopco Improv Theatre

**Bashir Chedrawee**  
Simone's Kitchen

**Ellen McHale**  
New York Folklore

**Tate Ottati**  
Tate's Comics

**Mitchell Ramsey**  
Jay Street Pub/Electric Grinch

**Phil Wajda**  
Union College



## *Message from the Board President and Executive Director*



*Welcome to the 2023-2024 Annual Report for the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation (DSIC).*

*This has been an exciting year of transition and growth for our organization, with new leadership driving us forward. In February 2024, we welcomed Maureen Neufeld as our new Executive Director. With her fresh perspective and strategic vision, Maureen is already shaping the future of our organization and reinforcing our commitment to enhancing Schenectady's downtown community.*

*One of our key developments this year was the creation of a Director of Operations position, which has enabled our staff to work more efficiently and tackle larger challenges in cleaning, beautification, and seasonal enhancements. The team has forged incredible partnerships throughout the city, and is actively working to create a welcoming landscape in Downtown Schenectady.*

*We invite you to read on to hear about the success of many of our signature events and partnerships this year. These expanded initiatives serve to showcase our local businesses and stimulate the local economy.*

*We celebrated the opening of Jay Square in October 2023; a new community green space across from Schenectady City Hall. This vibrant public park is now a popular gathering spot for residents, hosting events like Jazz on Jay and the Art in Bloom series at the Schenectady Greenmarket.*

*With new leadership in place and the continued dedication of our team, we are excited for the future of Downtown Schenectady. Thank you for being a part of our ongoing growth. We look forward to building on the momentum that is driving our city forward.*

**Heather Peterson**  
President, Board of Directors

**Maureen Neufeld**  
Executive Director



## Financial Review for years ending December 31, 2023 and 2022

		2023	2022
<b>Support and Revenue</b>			
	City of Schenectady assessment revenue	\$ 355,000	\$ 330,000
	Grants	\$ 371,790	\$ 293,220
	Grants - Jay Square Project	\$ 523,038	
	Donations	\$ 54,748	\$ 95,640
	Donations - Jay Square Project	\$ 115,892	
	Marketing participation	\$ 10,760	\$ 625
	Interest income	\$ 5,787	\$ 3,430
	Special event, Net	\$ 9,383	\$ (1,940)
	Ticket sales	\$ 47,360	\$ 40,520
	Other income	\$ 22,604	\$ 29,693
<b>Total Support and Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 1,516,362</b>	<b>\$ 791,188</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
	Program Services		
	Environmental enhancement	\$ 1,291,381	\$ 656,237
	Business promotion and marketing	\$ 217,513	\$ 182,360
	<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$ 1,508,894</b>	<b>\$ 838,597</b>
	Supporting Services		
	Administration	\$ 44,506	\$ 23,563
	Fundraising and development	\$ 23,927	\$ 35,094
	<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>\$ 68,433</b>	<b>\$ 58,657</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 1,577,327</b>	<b>\$ 897,254</b>
<b>Changes in Net Assets</b>		<b>\$ (60,965)</b>	<b>\$ (106,066)</b>
	Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$ 632,464	\$ 738,530
	Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 571,499	\$ 632,464

### Jay Square Project



*In 2023, the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation made significant strides in community engagement and financial performance, highlighted by the opening of Jay Square. This new greenspace, developed on the site of buildings lost to fire in 2015, became a key budget line item following two years of planning and collaboration.*

*The project's completion in October 2023, directly contributing to the significant increase in activity reflected in our audit. This investment in public space, along with strengthened community partnerships and expanded programming, underscores our commitment to revitalizing Downtown Schenectady and driving continued growth in the district.*

## Main highlights

# WELCOME

### **New Leadership**

After significant growth over the past few years, the DSIC expanded its organizational profile to bring on a new Director of Operations in July 2023, and a new Executive Director in February 2024

### **Public Spaces**

In October 2023, we were thrilled to open Jay Square, the new public greenspace in the heart of Downtown Schenectady. This park is now home to concerts, community events, and public gatherings.

### **Events & Programming**

This has been an exceptional year of growth for DSIC's signature events, including the addition of new programs, all created to drive visitors downtown to explore all that our city has to offer.

## Mission

The mission of the DSIC is to promote Downtown Schenectady as a premiere location for commerce, recreation, and living by enhancing, facilitating, and supporting economic and cultural growth.

## Our Principle Programs

### Community Support

- Ribbon cuttings for new businesses
- Support and promotion of downtown events and partnership opportunities
- Resources for local businesses and organizations

### Promotions & Events

- DSIC hosts a series of annual events to drive tourism and showcase local businesses
- Weekly promotion of local businesses through social media, newsletters, and DSIC website.

### Environmental Enhancement

- Daily sidewalk cleanup and seasonal maintenance
- Beautification efforts including landscaping, flowers, and banners
- Installation of holiday wreaths and decorations
- Community-focused maintenance initiatives and event support

## Beautification

### FLOWER BASKETS AND PLANTERS

- 175 hanging baskets were distributed and cared for throughout the Downtown Schenectady footprint
- 220 Street planters planted with trees and flowers and maintained all summer
- Several landscaping projects through partnerships with Schenectady Metroplex
- Additional seasonal waterers brought on to keep up with watering flowers 6 days per week.



### WINTER HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

- Downtown holiday decorations are installed annually for seasonal beautification in partnership with City of Schenectady

### SNOW CLEARING

- DSIC is proud to supplement city and property owner responsibilities by clearing snow at intersections, handicap parking spots, along 200+ curb cuts, and near garbage cans to enhance pedestrian safety.



#### THE NEW TEAM IN TOWN

- Carney McGuire was hired as the new Director of Operations to enhance our strategic approach and operational efficiency.
- With a robust skill set in cleaning, landscaping, and beautification, our team is committed to elevating Schenectady's public spaces, ensuring a cleaner, greener environment for all.

# Exciting Growth in the Community

## WELCOMING NEW RESIDENTS

- 2023-2024 has seen a resurgence of residential opportunities in newly constructed and recently renovated buildings.



## PUBLIC ART AND MURALS

- Several ambitious murals have been painted in 2024, with more in planning phases, adding vibrant art to our city on a large scale



## PLACEMAKING AND SCULPTURES

- Three sculptures by Robert Blood were installed throughout Downtown Schenectady, thanks to the efforts of the DSIC Beautification Committee



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## Community Programs

*"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."*  
~Coretta Scott King



### HOMETOWN HEROES

- 2024 marked the 10th anniversary of this program. To date, DSIC has honored 432 Schenectady service members with Hometown Heroes banners.
- Banners hang throughout Schenectady from Memorial Day through Veterans Day

### SUMMER SEND-OFF CONCERT

- Free concert in Gateway Plaza featuring Sydney Worthley & The Refrigerators
- Made possible through support from Arts Center of the Capital Region, Schenectady County Legislature, and Rivers Casino



### FALL SPOOKTACULAR

- Over 40 vendors providing free activities, crafts, games, and artisan goods for the Schenectady community
- This event welcomed thousands of visitors to the downtown shopping district



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# Partnerships

## Schenectady City Mission Workforce Development

DSIC launched a pipeline program with the Schenectady City Mission to provide training and employment opportunities for Workforce Readiness program participants



**Shop Small** \*  
**Shop Local** \*

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**Shop All Season** \*  
*In Downtown Schenectady*

Explore our businesses at [downtownschenectady.org](http://downtownschenectady.org)

## Small Business Saturday

DSIC produced a *Shop Small* video in 2023 to showcase a variety of small businesses in the downtown footprint. Events and promotions throughout the year are intended to help boost our local economy.

## Kids Arts Festival & Schenectady Arts Week

Kids Arts Fest kicked off a week-long showcase of local artists, cultural opportunities, exhibits, and classes. DSIC created a roster of Arts Weeks opportunities that featured 54 individual events through 18 community partners.



## Ribbon Cuttings and Business Promotions

The DSIC is so proud to participate in ribbon cuttings and press events to help launch dozens of new businesses in Schenectady each year.



## Additional Partnerships Celebrated in 2023-2024

- Union College Community Engagement Volunteer Efforts
- Jazz On Jay Concert Series
- Kids Arts Festival
- Stockade Walkabout
- Schenectady Summer Night
- Schenectady County Holiday Parade
- Schenectady Greenmarket
- Cycle the Erie Bike trail cleanup efforts
- Schenectady Farmer's Market
- Targeted cleanup efforts following major downtown events



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## Events

### Signature Restaurant Events

*A thriving restaurant scene is a sign of a vibrant and engaged community.*



- Largest participation in 2024 with 32 participating restaurants and 6,000 visitors to Downtown Schenectady
- **Winner:** Greek-style Cauliflower Chowder with Lemon Potatoes (Simone's Kitchen)

- Now in its 2nd year, the Tater Trot adds a fun signature event for restaurants during the warm weather months to boost visitation and showcase creativity
- **Winner:** Purple Potato Ice Cream with Sweet Potato Caramel (High Five @ The Electric Grinch)



- Our most successful year to date with 23 participating restaurants and 2,500 tickets sold
- **Winner:** Nashville Garlic Parmesan Wings with Ranch (The Nest)

- Week-long event throughout Schenectady in partnership with **Discover Schenectady** and **Capital Region Chamber**
- 24 participating restaurants offered multiple course lunch and dinner pre-fixe menus for \$20, \$30, and \$40



# A Year in Pictures



New Rise Gallery  
at SCCC



Hometown Heroes



Summer Send-Off Concert



Flowers in Jay Square  
(Photo Credit: Vincent Giordano)



Food Events!

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